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PHILIP
WALTON

The image shows the front cover of a book, bound in dark green or black leather. The cover is decorated with extensive gold tooling. A wide, rectangular border is formed by a series of parallel lines, with the innermost line being the most prominent. Within this border, there are four square corner pieces, each containing a stylized eight-pointed star or snowflake design. The central area of the cover is framed by a large, eight-pointed star shape, also known as a Maltese cross. This star is outlined with a double line of gold tooling, and its points are decorated with small, circular motifs. The name "PHILIP WALTON" is printed in a serif font, centered within the star-shaped frame. The overall design is classic and elegant, typical of traditional bookbinding.

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'As the light fell upon the lady's face, Philip felt p
wife of his old friend was standing before him.'—PWW
165.

(Frontispiece.)

PHILIP WALTON

OR

LIGHT AT LAST.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF 'META FRANTZ,' ETC.

•

EDINBURGH

WILLIAM P. NIMMO

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PHILIP WALTON, OR LIGHT AT LAST.



CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST SORROW.

IT was a bright May morning in Devonshire. The woods were ringing with rich melody, and the hum of the early bee mingled with the notes of the blackbird and cuckoo. Sweet-scented lilacs, laburnum, and the white thorn were in beauty, and everywhere Nature wore her holiday garb. But there were sad hearts in the old mansion-house, and

the master's springing step had grown dull and slow. The angel of death had entered his dwelling, and she whose quiet light had been the guiding-star of those around her was laid in her silent grave. Unequal to the task of rousing himself, the broken-hearted husband turned away his eyes from every favourite scene, and at last resolved to bid adieu to his home, and hasten to a foreign land ; but 'the gloomiest day had gleams of light,' and Mr. Walton's hopes and comfort were centred in his only son.

Philip Walton was just sixteen. Hitherto his boyhood had been bright and free like the little mountain stream in summer-time. He was much indulged, but a gentle home-influence was ever deepening what was noble in his character, and tending to restrain the faults which a mother's watchful eye could see. All that was good and true he linked with his mother's name, and when he saw her laid in the

old burying-ground near Ilfracombe, it seemed as if the brightness of his young life had for ever fled.

On the summer morning referred to, Philip had risen early, and lying on a mossy bank near the centre of the wood, he watched the squirrels, while his arm rested fondly on an old mastiff, which was his constant companion. By and bye he was joined by the gamekeeper, a faithful retainer in the family.

‘Good-morning, Mr. Philip,’ said Stenhouse, respectfully touching his hat. After a little conversation about the trees, the latter said gravely, ‘So it is all settled, sir, and you are going to travel?’

‘Yes,’ began the young man briskly, ‘I must see the world; I cannot spend my life in a corner.’ Then, observing the old man’s downcast looks, and guessing the sad feelings, which found an echo in his own breast, Philip added, ‘My father and I will come back again by and


bye, and we know that you'll keep everything right in our absence.'

'I will do my best, sir, and we will hope that the change may do good to my master.' Afterwards pointing to the dog, he asked, 'Shall I take care of him, sir?'

'Ah, yes; poor Bounce cannot leave the old place;' then in low tones he added, 'And look here, Stenhouse; if anything happens to Bounce I wish you to bury him at the foot of the beech-tree near the garden wall.'

Just then a lark soared overhead, filling the air with its song.

Philip rose hastily, and brushing the dew-drops from his coat, he nodded a kindly good-bye to his companion, and walked onwards, trying to dispel the feelings of melancholy which oppressed him. The future with its fairy colours lay like an unopened book before him. And with the hopefulness of youth he was *looking forward* to a time when brighter days



might be in store for him. As a child he was singularly precocious, and now that youth was merging into manhood, a spirit of inquiry and thoughtfulness characterized him. Good-tempered, and full of quiet humour, Philip was popular with his companions, and an open-hearted generosity led him to befriend those whom fortune had favoured less highly than himself. His education was principally carried on by tutors, and although during the last year he had been boarded at an excellent school, his holidays and home visits were so frequent, that his progress in learning was more the result of natural abilities than of diligent application. Philip's father was an accomplished and amiable man. Indolent and pleasure-loving, perhaps,—for in his case, as in many others, the unvarying smile of fortune did not conduce to moral energy. Many a pleasant tour had Philip enjoyed with his parents. Sometimes they spent weeks in exploring their own lovely

country ; and again they would take him into Wales, where the picturesque costume of the peasants and the strangely-spelt words of their language tickled his youthful fancy. But a happy visit to Scotland shone out more brightly than the rest in Philip's memory. There, in a lovely Highland strath, his mother's early years were spent ; and he remembers yet with what looks of joyous pride she pointed out the beauties of her home to her husband and little boy, telling them to admire its towering fir-woods, its blue lochs, and heath-clad moors. Often, then, had his hand rested in hers, while they climbed the mountain-side, gathering the blue-bell or wild fruits, and startling the timid moor-fowl from her heathery bed. It was his mother's smile which rewarded him the first time he caught a brightly-spotted trout, and tossed it in boyish glee on a green bank at her feet.

But these pages of Philip's history are folded

away, sorrow's first shadow has rested on his brow, graver thoughts have crept into his heart, and the schoolboy begins to feel himself a man.

A college-life at Oxford had previously been spoken of as his destiny, and he was wont to quote laughingly from 'Tom Brown's' experiences, telling his father and mother that his 'purse must be always full, for his entertainments would be legion, and that boat-races might probably take the place of study.' But now his father cannot part with him, and friends have suggested that after a continental tour they should settle in Germany, where Philip could have every educational advantage.

The last few days in the old mansion-house passed sadly enough, and Philip was almost glad when the time of departure came. All the adieux had been said, from the kind old vicar down to the most humble servant on the estate. Philip spent one long hour in the study

of the former, gazing wearily at the diamond patterns in the faded carpet, and only half listening, we fear, to the wise yet somewhat lengthened counsel which fell from the good man's lips. But the words of his parting wish, 'May your mother's God keep you, my boy,' came back to him in long-after years, and our story will tell what he thought of them then.





CHAPTER II.

PHILIP BIDS FAREWELL TO ENGLAND.

RAIN fell heavily as the old yellow carriage drove to the door, and the clouds, which were hovering overhead all morning, now covered the sky with their blackness. 'But it is right that the sun should hide its face to-day,' was the mental observation of the worthy housekeeper, while she gave a finishing touch to the packing, and put a jar of her young master's favourite sweetmeats into his box.

'Take care of yourself, Mrs. Williams,' said Philip; then, with a faint attempt at joking, he

added, 'you may expect a German letter from me some day.'

'Well, sir, I hope you will not forget us,' replied the good woman tearfully; 'and oh! be a comfort to my poor master.'

Mr. Walton stepped into the carriage with a hurried farewell, and, in consideration of his feelings, many of the servants only watched his departure from a distance.

On reaching the ivy-mantled gateway, Philip saw Stenhouse holding poor Bounce by a chain, as if each wished to have a last peep, and, putting his head out of the carriage-window, he called out, in heartfelt tones, 'Good-bye, and thank you.' The old man bowed low, and patted the dog, thereby testifying that his master's wishes were fully understood.

Few words were spoken during that long melancholy drive, while the rain fell in torrents, and the well-known row of lime-trees and broad *oaks* seemed partly hidden by the gathering

mist. By and bye the father and son were seated in a railway carriage, and the train, with lightning speed, parting and uniting many, was carrying them to London.

Railway stations in the great city are alike disagreeable when it rains. But above the cry of eager cabmen, looking out for hire, or of porters ready to assist any lady with her luggage, we hear the hearty tones of Mr. Walton's brother, a portly dignitary of the Church of England, who is standing on the platform, and welcoming our travellers. Shaking each warmly by the hand, he hurries them into his carriage, bidding the coachman drive to Eccleston Square without delay.

The Reverend Fenwick Walton was Philip's favourite uncle ; his large grey eyes twinkled with good-humoured fun, and he had often spent long summer weeks in Devonshire, making his nephew the companion of his rambles, and always finding him an attentive listener to his

stories. A warm, genial spirit pervaded the clergyman's household, and the kindly sympathy now shown towards poor Mr. Walton, even by the youngest member, touched and soothed him greatly.

Surrounded by a group of merry cousins, and pleased to be again in busy London, the sights and occupations of the outer world brought their own brightness into Philip's heart. God be praised that the sorrows of youth sink not too deeply! Lost friends are not forgotten, but Time acts as a 'restorer,' and hopes for the future will sometimes rise above past trials, and thus give strength and energy for the sterner duties of after years.

Philip's eldest cousin and namesake was now in orders for the ministry. Crowned with honours when at Oxford, and prepossessing in appearance and manners, our young friend was wont to look up to him as a paragon. But *the young clergyman* was much changed; he

had become strongly imbued with High Church principles, and his conversations regarding rites and ceremonies were scarcely interesting to Philip.

Far be it from us to say that there are not excellent men who hold extreme views. But young Walton's wish was to try to '*reform*' the Church of England's good old way, to introduce the confessional, and to adopt many of the vestments worn by the Romish clergy.

Although Philip was a boy in years, his perception and powers of reasoning were great, and, after repeatedly listening to his cousin's arguments, he said with unwonted impetuosity, 'Why, Phil, you are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; I advise you to be an honest man, and cross over to Rome.' A smile was the only reply. The elder clergyman was of a singularly unruffled temperament, but his son's views vexed him, and he earnestly hoped that the 'first

ardour would wear off, and that his new ideas might tame down.'

We need scarcely add that such hopes were never realized. From henceforth the two cousins agreed to 'differ' and be friendly, and the younger brothers and sisters in the family, who were nearer Philip's age, became more especially his companions. The 'few days' which Philip and his father intended to spend in London grew into weeks. At length their future plans shaped themselves somewhat suddenly.

Among the Reverend Mr. Walton's visitors was Mr. Harvey, an eminent barrister, and his son being at a school in Bonn, he strongly advised that Philip should join him. Various inquiries were made, and a glowing account of the training and tuition having been received, matters were at once settled. The pretty, cheerful town of Bonn was for a time to become Mr. Walton's home, and Philip was to *attend* the school as a day-boarder. Sidney

Harvey and Philip had met in London the previous Christmas, and Philip, fascinated by Sidney's clever style of talking, pronounced him 'a capital fellow.'

Alas! he little knew that his influence was to cast a shadow over years of his after life! Young Harvey's father, although indifferent on the subject of religion, was by no means a scoffer, and attended church pretty regularly. He was proud of his son's talents, and as the latter was careful in never expressing private opinions before his elders, Mr. Harvey was not aware that his sentiments were decidedly infidel. Content with giving him a Bible and Church Service, not a word about the 'one thing needful' ever passed between father and child, and the busy cares of life gave the barrister no time to discover that the works of Paine and Voltaire, as well as those of Strauss and other infidel writers of a more recent date, were Sidney's frequent study. Mrs. Harvey lived in

the world of fashion ; she loved her children as much as a woman of her frivolous and selfish nature could do ; and seeing that Sidney was only at home during his holidays she knew less about him than the others. Thus much then regarding the home life of one whom we shall know better by and bye.

In the meantime the day came on which Philip was to take leave of old England. He had had the last ride with his cousin Emma in Rotten Row ; there would be no more pleasant saunters with Bill and Harry in the Zoological Gardens, and altogether the breaking up of a happy party was not an inspiring thought. True, there was a promise that the cousins would all meet in Switzerland during the autumn, and Philip, who was ever treated like a child of the household, clung to that hope. To see new countries, and thus gain knowledge, had peculiar charms for the youth ; but combined with manly independence, his was a

keenly sensitive and affectionate nature, and partings always pained him, while the friendships he formed were deep and lasting.

There was scarcely a ripple on the waters that cool grey evening, when our travellers embarked at Folkestone. The pier was thronged with visitors: some gaily dressed folks, who lived the long summer through at watering-places, flitting like butterflies from one fashionable resort to another. And there were men whose pale haggard looks told that they needed fresh air, who were perhaps suffering from the daily routine of a London counting-house, or were feeling that the brain had grown weary over midnight study. Each face had its history; but the group in whom we are interested have waved their adieu to our friends on board, and the lateness of the hour bids them hurry to the station, or they will not reach Eccleston Square that night. Philip cast a long look after the well-known figures, but now they have vanished

in the crowd, while the shore begins to grow distant and the ship is moving onward.

With his arm in his father's, he was quietly pacing the deck, and scarcely realized that England would soon be hidden from their gaze. 'I sent a budget of news to Mrs. Williams yesterday,' he said, 'and invented no end of kind messages to them from you, *bon père*.'

'Thank you, my boy,' was Mr. Walton's reply, then with a sigh he murmured, 'How well the old place will be looking now!' Both were silent for a time, and Philip's thoughts were busy picturing the arrival of the post-bag at Fairley Hall. He knew full well how eagerly his letter would be read, and how faithfully the good housekeeper would deliver the various messages, until nearly every cottager was told of his master's welfare, and that the home people were not forgotten.

By and bye his reverie was interrupted by a remark from the captain—'Well, sir, you are

in luck to-night : we shall have a calm crossing, and one cannot often promise *that* in the Channel.' Countless stars twinkling overhead, and a vast sheet of water all around, inspired Philip with a wondering awe, which many have felt on a first night at sea. How blessed if all realized the Saviour's presence at such times, remembering that the protecting arm once outstretched to Peter is near to aid us still !

'Shall you go down-stairs, sir ?' asked the captain.

'Oh no,' Philip said ; 'we cannot leave this scene ; let us have our wraps here, and remain on deck.'

'All right,' replied the old sailor, smiling.

'And I don't object, my boy,' added Mr. Walton, 'only you will be ready for a good sleep after we reach Boulogne.'

Not much can be said about the charms of the latter place. After a hasty survey of its streets, Philip showed no wish to linger, and at

the close of the first day our travellers found themselves in Paris.

A week of exquisite weather and enjoyment followed ; Philip thought he was having a peep into fairyland, and poor Mr. Walton's sad face would sometimes relax into a smile at his son's enthusiasm.

From Paris they proceeded to Strasbourg, and after visiting one or two German towns, seeing various subjects of interest at Frankfurt, watching the gaming-tables at Homburg, and admiring the castles and vineyards on the banks of the Rhine, they turned their faces towards Bonn.






CHAPTER III.

BONN AND HEIDELBERG.

THE first impressions of a place often differ widely from an after opinion. But after two years of schoolboy life Bonn appeared to Philip the same bright and restful spot as on that sunny afternoon when he first watched his new school-fellows gliding along the river in their boats. Young Harvey welcomed him in a friendly manner, initiating him in school ways. He was older than Philip, and the latter soon perceived that the other boys deferred to Harvey's opinions, while he was often chosen umpire in their quarrels. His

witty and sometimes sarcastic remarks were quoted, and being clever rather than amiable, stupid fellows avoided exposing themselves to his ridicule. A friend of Sidney Harvey's gave Philip at once a standing in the school, and Sidney, who was violent in his likings and dislikes, had taken a strong fancy to his new companion. Both entered keenly into sports, nor did their energies flag when study came. Music had a special charm for them, and Philip being gifted with a voice, delighted to join in the glees which often enlivened their boating parties.

School-life then at Bonn went on smoothly and happily, and during holiday-time Mr. Walton and his son visited various places. The former enjoyed rusticating in parts of Normandy, where the white cliffs with their green covering reminded him of Devonshire. Philip was amused with the quaint little towns ; *admiring the old châteaux*, some of them in ruins,



and others inhabited by nice French families, who were noted for their kindness to strangers.

When weary of quiet, Paris was an unfailing resort ; and the Swiss tour with his London cousins, as well as a pleasant expedition to Biarritz and the Pyrenees, were bright features in Philip's holiday months.

Harvey and he continued steady friends, and when Mr. Walton used to take his son little trips, going sometimes to Cologne on Saturday until Monday, Harvey was their companion.

At an early period of their acquaintance the two youths were at Cologne one Sunday. They spent the morning in the cathedral, listening to the grand organ, and afterwards they strolled about, visiting the Zoological Gardens and other places of interest. Mr. Walton proposed that they should go to hear Protestant service in the evening ; and when the hour came Philip observing that Harvey was slipping away, said ' Will you not go with us ?'

A cold sneer, with a muttered 'Certainly not,' was the only reply.

Another time Harvey went into his friend's room to borrow a pen-knife, and staying to talk and examine things, as boys generally do, he descried a neatly bound book entitled 'Words of Jesus;' tossing the little volume aside, he said scornfully, 'I wonder you can read such cant!'

'My mother gave it to me,' rose to Philip's lips, but after one glance at the contemptuous expression in his companion's face, he repressed these words, remarking quietly, 'Look over my book-shelf, and you will perhaps find something to entertain you better.'

Harvey's total disregard of religion shocked Philip; but slowly at first, and with subtle power, his influence was working. 'Easy is the road down hill!' And by and bye when the boys met on Sundays, Philip found it less *difficult* to ask his indulgent father to excuse

his attendance at church, for Harvey was waiting to walk with him, or that he had asked him to have a row on the river.

Poor Mr. Walton, his son was his idol, and the word 'No' was seldom spoken. Amiable, and with little decision of character, he soon gave Philip his own way in everything. He disliked discussions, especially those of a religious nature ; his wife's was a noiseless, Christian walk, and he admired religion as she reflected it ; but, alas ! he was still a stranger to its saving power.

At the age of eighteen Philip bade adieu to his quiet life at Bonn, and realized with a pleasurable excitement that in future he would be his own master. Three years afterwards, on a fine September evening, he was at Heidelberg with a party of friends. They had ascended the hill to the old castle, and, seated on a broad wall, were enjoying their cheroots and admiring the sunset. Philip had become ex-

tremely handsome,—broad and commanding in figure, with finely-marked features, and a world of expression in his deep blue eyes. Refined in his tastes, highly accomplished, and possessed of considerable wealth, we need not wonder that his society was courted. Mr. Walton objected to his choosing a profession, saying he would leave him a large fortune, and that after his death he hoped he would return to his ancestral home, and care for the poor people and broad lands in Devonshire.

The former, although comparatively speaking a young man, was in declining health, and his medical advisers prescribed the ordinary *régime* —‘to travel,’ choosing a mild climate, and especially to have cheerful society. Hitherto father and son had been roaming to Philip’s heart’s content. Sometimes in Switzerland, where the Alpine breezes invigorated the invalid, and the beautiful scenery furnished subjects for young Walton’s pencil. The ‘Eternal City,’ with its

time-renowned wonders, had been visited, and now Heidelberg, famous alike for beauty of situation and men of learning, became the centre of attraction. Sidney Harvey, Philip's school-fellow, studied law there, making for himself a little circle of friends, and at the time we refer to he was paying them a visit previous to entering a house of business at Basle.

There is something grand in a September sunset, with the sky's bright colours reflecting themselves in the rivers, and lighting up the golden sheaves. Perhaps we admire it more because the frosty air reminds us that autumn's glory is departing.

'Lend me your pencil, Harvey,' said Philip ; 'I must take a rough outline of the castle and its surroundings, trusting to memory for the colouring. It is too late to attempt more ; besides, I cannot produce anything so brilliant.'

'All right, Mr. Artist, and after your bit of

work is done, Kunz and I are longing to hear your opinion of the book I gave you.'


Philip's brow was slightly clouded, as, glancing towards the rest of the party, he answered, 'Why choose grave subjects now? You and I can discuss the matter in Kunz's room afterwards.'

'No, no,' said the young German referred to; 'here we are a little debating society, ready to talk about serious matters, whether it be chemistry, astronomy, or the religions of different countries.'

'Come, Walton, let us have a good argument,' rejoined another, 'and tell us what is the book in question.'

Thus appealed to, Philip named one of Voltaire's infidel works. Harvey, who was watching him, added with assumed carelessness, 'Our friend Walton has a few early prejudices, but a fellow enlightened as he is must soon become a despiser of creeds.'

Indifference to religion and neglect of ordinances often lead to infidelity. Released from all control, Philip seldom entered a church, and his Bible was unopened. True, he enjoyed listening to the solemn music of a cathedral, but there was no worship for him in the Latin masses; and the Protestant service, which on the Continent is frequently very simple, he condemned as 'tame and uninteresting.' Sometimes, when for a little his thoughts turned to religion, dark doubts would flit across his mind, and these were strengthened by reading the books with which, during the last month, Harvey had furnished him. But the good seed early sown in his heart, although lying dormant, was not rooted up. Profane jests made him feel uncomfortable, and his lips were silent, while many around him were often saying, 'We can do as we wish, for there is no God to judge our actions.' In reply to Harvey's remark, he said frankly, 'I don't go so far as you do, still



I am ready to listen to reason, and I agree with the poet who says—

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

‘Throw off the yoke at once,’ observed Kunz; ‘be a freethinker, enjoy this glorious world, and believe in no hereafter, for when we die we sink into nothingness.’

Much more was spoken by the little party in the same strain. Harvey produced a Bible, discussing its contents as he would a book of science, and classing the sacred doctrines of Christianity with the belief of the Pagan or the Buddhist.

After that evening Philip and one or two of his friends often met for religious, or, as some more properly termed them, profane discussions, and infidel views were too surely intruding themselves into his mind. Elderly men also, whom he revered for their learning, and

whose judgment in worldly matters was considered sound, held these opinions, and he asked himself the question—Were they wrong?

The serpent in the early world thought himself wiser than God, and many of Adam's children think so still. Often at the present day, as in gospel times, do we find learned men ignorant of the Truth, while the unlettered peasant, or the little child, know and love its blessed teaching.

And yet, we would not put Learning on one side and Religion on the other. No! let the man of science consider the unselfish love of Christ, and when the grand plan of redemption breaks in with Heaven's light upon his spiritually dark soul, he will wonder and adore.

Scepticism did not make Philip happier. But the progress of error is less perceptible at an early stage, and not until time passed on, and changes came, did he feel its blighting influence. Heidelberg had many charms for one

of his literary tastes. He was a favourite with the old Professors; the gay world, too, welcomed him as a star, and Harvey gave him so many introductions that he rarely spent an evening at home.

In summer-time an occasional run to Basle by train was a pleasant variety for Mr. Walton and himself. Harvey had begun business there, and sometimes, on wet days, Philip beguiled an idle half-hour by copying law-papers for him, yawning over the work, and yet playfully suggesting that should his 'fortune take wings any day, he would gladly accept the office of his friend's clerk.'





CHAPTER IV.

FACILIS DESCENSUS AVERNI.



YEAR or two have slipped away. Philip has now a home-feeling towards Heidelberg ; the faces in the streets, the shady walks, and each grey stone in the old castle have grown familiar. But Mr. Walton has been seriously ill, and both are reluctantly preparing to leave their pleasant residence, and return to a drifting mode of life.

In the meantime the world had been smiling upon Harvey. A partner in a prosperous firm, he was gradually making his fortune, and within the last few months he had married a German

lady of great wealth. Some of the beautiful vineyards which skirted the banks of the Rhine belonged to her father, and the latter being pleased with his English son-in-law, gave him an elegant villa in the suburbs of Basle, and Harvey's flower-garden and fruit-house were the envy of all. But as there are dark shades in a fine picture, so the marriage was not all brightness. Harvey's parents were displeased that his wife was a foreigner, and although religion was regarded lightly by them, yet they were shocked to discover that, like Sidney, their daughter-in-law was an infidel.

Several beautiful writings, as well as personal acquaintance with the nation, tell us that in Germany there are many excellent Christians, but Harvey's friends were chosen either among persons who were utterly indifferent, or those who held heterodox opinions. His own moral character was irreproachable, but his brothers-

in-law were only too well known for their gambling and dissipated habits.

Of course Philip Walton was one of the wedding party, and after the event, he became a frequent visitor at the house of Mrs. Harvey's father.

Continental life familiarized him with many things, yet he was scarcely prepared for the lawless ways of his new friends. Great hospitality and a passion for music were their redeeming qualities. Pleasure with them was the aim of existence, and Philip was not slow in perceiving that their minds were essentially frivolous. Harvey's wife, although not pretty, was gay and fascinating in her manner, while her mental qualities were superior to those of her brothers. Her husband and she seemed happy, and yet Philip had misgivings as to the wisdom of his friend's choice.

Infidel opinions did not shock him now, as in former days, but profane words, when spoken

by woman's lips, grate harshly on the ear of the most careless, and have been known to make the oldest sceptic shudder. True religion, on the other hand, lends a grace and gentleness to woman's character, which all appreciate, although some may not know the blessed source from which these virtues flow.

Meta Harvey's character lacked the stability ascribed to her nation, and an intimate acquaintance showed Philip that she was passionate and self-willed, without any ruling principle to guide her actions. A kindly welcome always awaited him in Sydney's home, but he often left it with dissatisfied feelings, and now he inwardly reproached himself for the small portion of regret which accompanied his 'good-bye' for an indefinite period. Philip's inner life was not happy. He had climbed the hill of learning; pleasure too, with her siren voice, was his companion, and he had money at his command; but, like a ship without its rudder, he felt as if

he were drifting onward over life's sea, and for him there seemed to be no haven in view. Former pursuits and pleasures were beginning to pall, and at times a spirit of weariness pervaded his inmost soul. Devotion to his invalid father was a ruling feature in his character ; the beauties of nature always charmed him, but changes of scene had become irksome. And at Wiesbaden, where, on account of its mineral waters, Mr. Walton afterwards sojourned for a little time, we find him trying to relieve the day's monotony at the gaming tables.

Mrs. Harvey's brothers furnished him with introductions to some idle, and, writing plainly we might add, to a few of the most worthless young men in the place.

Absence of religion and depravity do not always go hand in hand. We admit that the latter often follows, and Philip had grown sufficiently careless, but there were certain depths of wickedness to which he never sank.

Removed from intellectual society, however, gambling became a snare, and night after night his stakes grew deeper. Sometimes he was flushed by success, or again the tide of fortune turned, and his purse became lighter. After the game was ended, and many sought the cool night air in the adjoining gardens, Philip was seldom allowed to enjoy his solitary cigar. One or two of his friends claimed him as a guest at their wine parties, or if he were victor, they expected to be entertained in return.

A taste for music, combined with a magnificent voice, made Philip only too popular. Constant gaiety helped to drown thought, and before many weeks went round, the handsome young man looked the ghost of his former self.

Poor Mr. Walton sighed in secret over the change in his son, blaming his new associates, and resolving if possible to leave Germany, and go at once to Naples, where it had been settled that they should winter.

Those of our readers who are familiar with Wiesbaden and its environs will remember a Greek church with a gilded dome, standing on a rising ground, and near it there is a beautiful cemetery. The latter place is tastefully laid out ; here a mass of white flowers, and there some lovely wreaths. The tomb-stones are exquisitely carved, varying in workmanship from the simple cross to those of a more elaborate description. That quiet sunny corner, 'God's Acre,' had a peculiar charm for Mr. Walton, and he often spent long mornings among the flowers.

Philip and he were there together one forenoon, having ascended the hill in German fashion, riding on donkeys. The former was feeling particularly dull and moody ; the outer sunshine did not revive him, but he tried to rouse himself, and cheered the invalid by occasional remarks on the surrounding beauty.

After a short silence, Mr. Walton said

abruptly, 'I think we have had enough of Wiesbaden; the baths have certainly done me good, but what do you say to our enjoying Italian skies during autumn?'


'*Avec plaisir,*' was Philip's reply; then he added, somewhat impatiently, 'the everlasting routine of this watering-place wearies me; I begin to loathe the smell of the gardens;—orange-blossom and myrtle mingling with the fumes of the hookahs, not to speak of the incessant jargon to which one listens. If you feel better, father, let us be off at once.' And taking his hand, he said, in apologetic tones, 'I have been too little with you of late, and have wasted my time with a set of idle fellows; I don't want to quarrel with them, so it may be well that I should *prendre congé* without delay.'

'You are not well, my son, but change will do you good, and as soon as you fix the day, I am ready to start for the pleasant bay of Naples.'

‘In three days, then, and if Naples be what you describe, I hope we may pitch our tents there for a long time. Hitherto we have moved from place to place like the shifting scenes in a diorama, and now the word *rest* has a charm for me.’

Did the quiet graves, and that calm day with its cloudless sky, suggest a dream of rest to Philip? His cup was full of earth’s blessings, but empty and unsatisfied is the heart which Jesus does not fill. He alone gives true rest; He is the anchor of the weary, and resting on Him we shall never drift on uncertain seas. Waves of sorrow often trouble the believer, but these only drive him nearer to the haven, and at last he shall pass safely through the Golden Gate.

The Bright City seemed a fable to poor Philip, for infidelity had thrown her dark web around him, and now he openly avowed her opinions. But there were times when he felt



that all was comfortless and unreal, and in his inmost heart he cherished a vague dreamy hope that peace and rest might yet be found.

Shortly after the conversation in the cemetery, Wiesbaden, with its gardens, its bands of music, and endless variety of amusements, had become a thing of the past. And far away in sunny Italy, in a city which is built on the side of hills, and partly sheltered by woods and mountains, we find the invalid father and his son.

Very weary-looking, with silvered hair, and his figure slightly bent, Mr. Walton was reclining in a low chair enjoying the cool twilight after a day of extreme heat. Philip had played some beautiful pieces from Beethoven, but daylight and memory having failed him, he was now warbling a low sweet air, the creation of his own fancy. Presently the door of the room opened, and a servant entered, bringing a small sealed note. Lights soon followed, and after reading the epistle Mr. Walton turned towards

Philip, saying, with looks of unusual animation, 'Here is a note from the Countess de Tours, a very old friend of your uncle Fenwick's and my own. We knew her years ago, as a merry English girl in Devonshire, but she married a French Count, and I have never heard of her till now. She saw our names in the list of arrivals, and writes begging us to visit her. Her husband, it appears, died some years ago, so she left Paris, and is now in Naples with her daughter, an only child. I would like to see her again,' he added, 'and judging from her wealth and position you are likely to meet good society at her house.'

'We shall call on her then some day,' Philip answered, with an easy indifference of manner which had become habitual to him; then fearing lest his father might think that he treated the matter coldly, he added, 'I am very glad that you have found a friend to whom you will be able to talk.'

The warm rays of the next day's sun resembled mid-summer heat, which in Naples is proverbially oppressive. Mr. Walton did not venture out of doors until after sunset, and then ordering a carriage, he suggested that Philip and he should pay the Countess a visit.

Scarcely did he recognise his old friend. In a large drawing-room, which displayed continental elegance, and also reminded one of English comfort, a dignified lady, in deep mourning, rose to meet him. Years had written their history in the countenance of each, but Mr. Walton soon perceived that the lady's frank manner and kindly greeting were unchanged.

Standing at an open window, her daughter Marie was tying up a beautiful creeper, and by her side a little dog sat erect begging for the string, which dangled from his mistress's fingers.

On the entrance of visitors the young lady came forward, and by and bye she was talking

simply and unaffectedly to Philip, and showing him her flowers. Marie de Tours was not tall, but graceful and fairy-like in figure. She had fine dark eyes, and, when animated in conversation, they sparkled with intelligence, lighting up her small regular features. Her dress that evening was of white muslin; and a crimson rose, which she had fastened in her hair, was her only ornament. Ices and coffee were brought in, and nearly two hours slipped away while Mr. Walton and the Countess were talking over old stories.

The young people found time to discover that each was musical, and as Philip glanced towards some spirited water-colours which adorned the walls, he guessed that the fair Marie could also use her pencil. A harp stood in a corner of the room, and, before rising to go, Mr. Walton asked the young lady to play to him, adding, 'It is long since I have listened to that instrument.'

Marie smiled her assent, playing an Italian air, which she accompanied with her voice, then turning to the old gentleman, she said with a charming *naïveté*, 'I shall give you an English ballad, which mamma taught me, and I keep it *seulement pour les Anglais*.'

The song proved to be a favourite of Mr. Walton's, and after giving Marie his warm thanks, he and Philip strolled leisurely homewards.

The evening air was now cool and refreshing. There was a fine sea-breeze, and both were experiencing the pleasant feeling which a discovery of kindred sympathy always gives.

An acquaintance, thus happily renewed, proved a great acquisition to Mr. Walton, and, far away from his friends and the scene of his old home, he sometimes fancied in his talks with the Countess that a bit of the past had come back again.

The Countess was an accomplished and

sensible woman, generous and kindly in her nature, but she and her daughter were Roman Catholics. Marie, in particular, was devoted to the religion of her infancy, and a worship ministering to the feelings of its members was only too well adapted to the poetical turn of her mind. Her mother was a pervert; she imbibed ritualistic notions at a school in France, and, finally yielding to the persuasions of her intended husband, she renounced Protestantism the day before her marriage and avowed herself a daughter of the Church of Rome.

Strange to say, although the Countess had many Protestant friends, she never attempted to proselytize, and her confessors often upbraided her for neglecting so important a 'duty.' But religion with her was a secondary consideration. She believed that the Church had her salvation in safe keeping, so she gave herself little trouble; and to interfere with the

creed of another was in her opinion a breach of courtesy.

Charming in her manners, and very hospitable, her parties were always pleasant. A knowledge of the world helped her to discriminate character, and, generally speaking, the circle of her acquaintances was wisely chosen. Mr. Walton's delicate health prevented him from joining in festivities, but Philip became a constant visitor, and by and bye his musical talents were considered indispensable at the Countess's reunions.





CHAPTER V.

CHRISTMASTIDE AT NAPLES.

PHILIP WALTON had many opportunities of watching the manners and customs of different countries, and his thoughtful mind led him to study character at the same time. He came to Naples without any introductions, but his intimacy with the De Tours soon made him acquainted with a number of English and foreign families. Their style of visiting was easy and friendly, and, in a delightful climate, where, except on the mountains, snow is seldom seen, and where one never shivers from the winter's cold, riding

and sketching parties went on uninterruptedly.

Marie de Tours was the centre of attraction to her little circle. In her character the grace and vivacity of '*la belle France*' was combined with solid and more enduring qualities, and she lacked the frivolity which historians often attribute to her nature. Half English in her parentage, she was gentle and home-loving in all her ways, and although she entered warmly into innocent gaieties, yet her chief pleasures were found in visiting the poor, and in the services of her religion.

Beautiful, accomplished, and the heiress of a large fortune, Marie had plenty of friends. But it was a nobleness and depth of feeling in her perfectly natural character, which impressed Philip Walton, and gave her a charm in his eyes. He had singular tact in adapting his conversation to all whom he met. Frivolous women were delighted with his ready banter,

and those who were clever soon discovered that in the young Englishman they had more than their match. But 'Marie de Tours is unlike any girl whom I have known,' was his mental remark. Hitherto, in his continental experience, fashionable women appeared to fritter away the hours in mere pleasure, but here was one whose actions showed him that life was real and earnest, and that wealth was not given to us for selfish ends.

Several weeks after the evening of their first meeting, Philip strolled into the Countess's verandah, taking with him a sketch which he had finished for Marie. Just then the young lady appeared in the door-way, followed by her dog, and partly concealed underneath a cloak. Philip's quick eye perceived a basket, which she carried over her arm. '*Sœur de charité!*' he exclaimed in gay tones, 'let me attend you on your mission.'

A deep blush, and momentary expression of

annoyance, shaded her face, then smiling, she said, somewhat saucily, 'No, no, I'll give you "Fidèle," but it would be no pleasure for you to wander through dirty lanes on this showery morning.'

A few half-complimentary and half-deprecatory remarks from Philip followed.

At length, speaking pleasantly, and with a quiet decision peculiarly her own, Marie remarked, 'Some other day I will be happy to walk with you, but I do not allow anything to prevent me from spending this morning with the poor.'

Seeing her determination, Philip opened the garden gate for her, and pretending to assume an air of offended dignity, he bowed gravely, and hurried off in search of her mother.

From the latter he elicited the story of her daughter's quiet labours. 'To-day,' said the Countess, 'she goes to read to a dying woman, and I believe she has a long list of sick and



'Pretending to assume an air of offended dignity, he bowed gravely and hurried off in search of her mother.'—PHILIP WALTON, page 58.



aged persons, whom she visits. A strange love the child has for that work, and her old nurse tells me that with her own hands she often prepares a little delicacy, and takes it to some invalid. Schools interest her very much, and she subscribes annually for the education of several poor children. Yesterday she slipped away from a morning concert to teach a little blind boy. She is very good, too good,' added the fond mother with a sigh, 'I sometimes tremble as I watch her earnest gaze while Father Antonio is talking to her against worldly pleasures, and I fear she may one day become a nun.'

'Nonsense,' Philip replied laughingly, 'and excuse me, but I hate Father Antonio; the gloomy expression of his eyes haunts me like nightmare. Father Adrian, on the contrary, is a genial old man, who looks you right in the face.'

'I confess that our kind old friend is my

favourite, but he is likely to be removed to another diocese, and I fear we shall lose him.'

'In that case does my aversion take his place?'

'Probably he may, so hush, mon ami, and beware of treason.'

'Trust me, madam, I shall be respectful, but remember liking does not grow at one's bidding.'

The golden season of autumn with its harvest of fruit and grain, and the early weeks of winter had fled.

Again that festive time, which is dear to every heart, the 'day of days' that hailed our Saviour's birth was coming round. Christmas brings a flood of old memories; it whispers of lost loved ones, binds human hearts more closely, and often at that time the prosperous sons of earth will look pityingly on their poorer brethren, and hold out to them a helping hand.

Few hearts were happier, or few hands more

busy than those of Marie de Tours. She was preparing a school-treat for several hundred children, and had enlisted many of her young friends in the generous work. Reticent in most cases regarding her own doings, she now wished the effort to be general, and in her ingenuous way she asked others to share her pleasure. Philip Walton was not behind the rest. Natural generosity and a desire to please one who was insensibly influencing his actions, proved an incentive to better things ; and when in Marie's society his infidel views often gave place to purer and holier feelings, until he longed to be a different man.

Perhaps the most harmless custom among Romanists, and one also adopted by a section of our Lutheran Churches, is decorating the House of God at festivals. Bright flowers, the work of a Creator's hand, seem not inappropriate at a joyous season. At the same time Christ's teaching tells us that our Heavenly

Father claims a higher offering, even a broken and a contrite heart, which is willing to renounce self, and to admit the loving Saviour there.

Shortly before Christmas-eve a bright little party thronged one of the churches in Naples. There was no incense burning, or service going on, but occasionally low talking, and a laugh not unmusical sounded through the vaulted archway, while festoons of flowers were being twined round the pillars, and a cross formed of white camellias was fastened here and there. An impartial listener might not have thought the conversation very wise, and the good-humoured face of Father Adrian, as he stood near to admire or criticise, was evidently no check on the spirits of his young friends. Father Antonio had gone to Rome for a few weeks, and Philip felt that a black cloud was removed from the horizon.

After the priest's departure, he designed and

executed a beautiful decoration for the altar, and as he and Marie were busily fixing it, she said abruptly, 'Mr. Walton, mamma tells me that Christmas is such a merry time throughout England; have your poor people at Fairley Hall a feast, and do they receive presents of clothing?'

Philip looked uncomfortable as he answered, 'You know I am now almost a stranger at home, but we give our steward general orders to inquire into the wants of the people, and I daresay the old housekeeper attends to them also.'

'Yes, I understand, and distance makes things more difficult.' Then, after a pause, she continued earnestly, 'But now that your father is an invalid, don't you think that you are responsible for the welfare of your people?'

'I fear that I have never thought much about it.'

'Forgive me then,' the young girl said with

a blush and a smile, 'but I am sure that kind inquiries coming from you at this season will be doubly prized ; and you might send a sum of money to your steward, asking him to distribute it among the poorer families in the way which he judges best.'

Philip was silent, and Marie feared that she had been too presumptuous. At length he said heartily, 'Thanks for the suggestion ; I shall write by this evening's post, and if some poor souls at Fairley are made happier this Christmas, we know who may take the credit.'

'The other day,' added Marie, by way of apology, 'when we were talking about money being a talent, you asked me to name some channel of usefulness ; I did not do it then, and to-night the poor in your own home came into my mind, so I ventured to express an opinion.'

'Say what you like always,' was the good-natured rejoinder, 'only I fear you have a sad heathen to deal with.'

Here the conversation was interrupted by Father Adrian, calling out in cheery tones, 'Come away, children, it is time you were all trudging homewards, and remember we need the church for other purposes.'

Philip's letter was duly penned, and reached Devonshire while snow-flakes were covering the winter's landscape. Its kind words were indeed 'good news from a far country.'

Many a poor hamlet was gladdened with presents of food and fuel, and some old women, who knew and loved Mrs. Walton, were now blessing her son, and praying that he might follow in her footsteps. And thus the pleasures of giving and receiving were felt in Old England at the same time that Marie and her friends, with many a peasant child, were experiencing their delights on the shores of Italy.

Christmas dawned brightly on Naples. Happy little faces were eagerly watching the clock, and perhaps murmuring at the tardy

hours until the time arrived when they all assembled in a large room, and their beloved Mademoiselle de Tours, or 'Signorina' (as they called her), drew back a crimson curtain and displayed a splendid Christmas tree.

Each child drew a useful gift from the spreading branches, where gaily-coloured lamps were hung, and after feasting their wondering eyes on the fairy scene, they adjourned to a hall, where an entertainment was prepared for them—not roast beef and plum-pudding, which English folks associate with 'Father Christmas,' but pies, cakes, and delicious fruits, all of which were soon discussed, and greatly enjoyed by the merry party. Music followed, the children first chanting a Christmas hymn and a 'Prayer to the Blessed Virgin.' Afterwards they were asked to sing a few songs, and the wild melody of their native airs, coming from so many young voices, produced a strangely thrilling effect.

Marie's countenance was radiant with delight

as she stood near some of the smaller children, her hand resting on the shoulder of a little blind boy, who was her peculiar care. Months afterwards she looked back to that happy day with tears, and a bitter sigh !

Mr. Walton felt too weak to attend Protestant service, as was his custom on Christmas morning ; and, partly to soothe the invalid, and also *pour passer le temps*, Philip played and sang a few sacred melodies, his music diverging at length into a moonlight sonata from Beethoven. In the afternoon the old gentleman rallied considerably, and was able to be present during the greater part of the children's entertainment.

A pleasant gathering at the Countess de Tours's finished the day. But before dressing to receive her guests, Marie hastened to Mr. Walton's house, attended by her nurse. Tapping at the door of the invalid's sitting-room, the young girl playfully announced herself, say-

ing, 'Church-going and the Christmas-tree have kept me from paying my respects to you all day, but here is a vase of flowers which nurse has carried along, and I hope they may cheer you while your son is with us this evening.'

Without waiting for thanks, she placed some exquisite roses on a small table near him, then slipping a book into his hand, she added, with slight embarrassment, 'Perhaps you may like to look into this work occasionally. It is written for Catholics, still it contains many sentiments which, I believe, Protestants must admire.'


'Thank you, dear child,' Mr. Walton replied gratefully; 'you know I am not bigoted, and I shall be happy to read what you have given me.'

'*All for Jesus*,' by Faber, was the book in question. The work is elegantly written, and parts of it, relating to our Saviour, are calculated to inspire veneration and love. On the

other hand, there are references to purgatory and intercessory prayer which are alike unscriptural and opposed to all sound Protestant views.

Marie believed that her Church was infallible; and yet, far above saint-worship and adoration of the Virgin Mary, there was in her heart a deep indwelling-love of a personal Saviour. That blessed germ of the true faith had taken root amid the errors of Popery, and gave a reality to her religion.

The declining state of poor Mr. Walton's health was becoming apparent to all who knew him, and, with a tender thoughtfulness which was natural to her, Marie felt anxious lest, while his days on earth seemed numbered, he might perhaps be careless about the salvation of his immortal soul! Hitherto she had not ventured to talk to him on religious subjects, but now she prayerfully resolved that her Christmas gift should be something to aid in



drawing his thoughts heavenwards, and preparing him, if the Lord willed, for a better and more lasting home.

According, then, to the light which God had given her, she selected the book we have named, leaving the result in His just and all-wise hands.

During the next few weeks, no event of any importance transpired. The old year 'rang out' with its joys, its sorrows, and perhaps its lost opportunities. And the opening of the new promised fair to bring happy peaceful days. But our Heavenly Father often sees meet to order our footsteps in the dark waters; and storms will come, and waves of trial pass over our heads, before the true light shineth.

There was not much chance of Philip becoming a Papist. And yet he might sometimes be seen in church with the Countess and her daughter. If the music happened to be good,

he was gratified, but the endless forms or 'mummeries,' as he mentally termed the Roman Catholic worship, wearied him. An occasional glance, however, at the rapt expression of Marie's countenance, convinced him that with her at least all was a reality, so he never ventured to express disapprobation.

At the beginning of their acquaintance she became aware of his infidel sentiments, and not in many words, but by quiet actions, she sought to lead him from them.

Father Adrian and he were on friendly terms; the former was an accomplished and gentlemanly man, but zealous Romanists considered him too tolerant in his religious views. During the last few years he had acted as Marie's confessor; his interest in her was great, but while listening to her merry laugh in society, Philip observed that a deep sigh would sometimes escape him. Could it be that the kind old man was anticipating the future? and

perhaps he knew that the Church had destined her removal from the happy scene of home and friends. There was bitterness in the thought, and yet it often came, making poor Philip very miserable.





CHAPTER VI.

FATHER ANTONIO AND HIS WORK.

MR. WALTON'S health revived with the dawn of the year ; but alas ! the improvement was like the warm glow from expiring embers, brightening only to fade and die. Cheered in the meantime by hopeful symptoms, Philip was constantly devising some plan to amuse the invalid. One lovely spring morning he drove him along the sea-coast ; the fresh breeze fanned the poor man's sunken cheeks, his spirits rose, and Philip came home trusting that happy days were yet in store for them.

‘Have a glass of wine after your morning’s work, Monsieur?’ he said in gay tones. Then proceeding to fill a glass near him, he observed Father Adrian’s card lying on the table, with P. P. C. written thereon. In a moment the young man’s countenance fell.

Mr. Walton took the card, saying quietly, ‘I am sorry he has gone, and we shall miss his friendly visits.’

‘Yes, we shall miss his visits, but that is the least of it,’ Philip added sternly; ‘his successor will be that designing Jesuit Antonio, whose presence I loathe. Take my word for it, father, he is a black-hearted fellow, who will bring trouble with him.’

‘You are severe, Philip; I have always found the poor priest most affable.’

‘All to serve his own end, the wily hypocrite. I detest Papists.’

‘Come, my son, all this is new to me; indeed, I have sometimes fancied that you yourself might

go over to Rome, and if her religion made you as good as Marie de Tours I would not object.'

'Never, sir,' was Philip's reply; after which he relapsed into a gloomy silence.

Father Antonio returned from Rome, and was speedily installed as family priest to the Countess and her daughter. Hitherto he had only been an occasional visitor, having been associated with Father Adrian, assisting him in Church services, and also in the more arduous duty of listening to confession.

Philip and he met without any 'passage of arms.'

Weeks went on, and although, as we have already hinted, Philip's suspicions were aroused, yet he could find nothing to censure in the priest's conduct.

The season of Lent was approaching; parties were on the wane, and Philip, who knew that, like all zealous Romanists, Marie would soon bestow little time on her friends, playfully

cautioned her not to 'waste all her energies on vigils and fasting.'

She smiled pleasantly, then shaking her head, while a grave look stole over her face, she added, 'Nay, nay, I must not have you jesting in that strain; the Church considers Lent one of the most solemn times.'

'*Très bien*, Mademoiselle; but remember that attention to health is a Christian duty, and an occasional ride is quite necessary.'

The Countess, overhearing the latter remark, gave it a hearty vote of approbation.

That evening Father Antonio proposed a drive into the country; and his conversation on the fine arts and moral culture was so refined and elevating, that Philip, who was one of the party, forgot his prejudice, and before reaching home conscience was whispering self-accusation, and bidding him learn the grace of charity.

On going into his father's room that night,

he was about to talk to him about his new and more favourable impressions, but the invalid's countenance wore a look of extreme exhaustion, so Philip judged it wiser to be silent.

Disease of the heart was the malady from which Mr. Walton suffered, and his son was aware that sooner or later it must prove fatal. After bidding him good-night, a foreboding of evil stole over him, the brightness of the last few hours vanished, and sleep refused to seal his restless eyelids.

Early morning found him at his father's bedside ; the doctor, whom he speedily summoned, confirmed his worse fears, and during the long days and weeks that ensued, life's feeble spark trembled in the balance. At length a crisis came, the dark shadow faded for a time; and Mr. Walton was a shade better. Wan and emaciated the poor man looked, as his attendant placed him on a couch in a sunny corner of the room, and the half-open window

allowed him to inhale the sweet perfume from the flower-garden below.

The Countess was a frequent inquirer during his illness, and now that he was recovering Marie supplied him with her rarest fruits and flowers. But so close was Philip's attendance in the sick-room that he never visited his friends, and it was with difficulty that the doctor could persuade him to take a short turn.

As strength came slowly back, and Mr. Walton remarked what was passing around him, he was struck by his son's haggard looks, and calling him to him one evening, he said kindly, 'My boy, you have done a great deal for me during this weary time, but I ask one thing more.'

'What is that?'

'Will you rid me of your company to-night?'

'*Pourquoi?*' Philip asked with a smile.

'Because I wish you to spend an hour or two with the De Tours; I am longing to hear their

news, and pray tell Mademoiselle Marie that I hope by and bye to listen to her music.'

Thus urged, Philip was soon wending his footsteps along the road leading to the Countess's house. His recent anxiety gave him a more than usually thoughtful expression ; indeed, so deep was his reverie, that it was some time before he knew that the two figures who walked steadily in advance of him were Father or Signor Antonio, as he was called by Protestants, and the Countess de Tours. Formerly, to have seen the dark-eyed Italian in close conversation with either of his friends would have made him uneasy, but to-night a genial spirit pervaded him, and he called out in hearty tones, ' Good-evening.'

The priest received his salutation in the blindest manner, asking affectionately after his father ; his companion was kind as ever, but she looked troubled, and her face lacked its usual animation. When they stopped at her

house Father Antonio raised his hat and walked on, and although Philip and the Countess were soon chatting comfortably in the pretty back drawing-room, yet the latter did not regain her cheerfulness.

‘Where is Marie?’ was the natural question.

‘In the chapel,’ the lady answered.

Philip knew that she referred to a room in the house, which, as is the case in many Roman Catholic families, had been fitted up for worship.

‘I shall send for her,’ added the Countess, and writing a few words on a slip of paper, she gave it to the old nurse, bidding her take it to her mistress.

A quarter of an hour afterwards Marie appeared, but the pretty evening dress of pale silk or muslin which she generally wore was replaced by a robe of dark-grey serge.

Our readers will easily believe that to Philip

Marie was charming in any garb, but less scrutinizing eyes than his must have observed her weary, pallid looks, which were scarcely concealed by the first flush of meeting.

Hitherto, after so many months of friendly intercourse, their conversation was wont to be free and unrestrained, but to-night an unknown barrier seemed to have arisen between them. There was no lack of words, and yet each was performing the hard and often-tried task of talking about indifferent subjects, while that which occupied the thoughts of both was never named.

Fifty times Philip was on the point of saying to Marie, 'Why are you so sad? Has anything happened?' But there was a gentle dignity in her misery which forbade questioning, and the Countess, who was usually all frankness of manner, had become grave and preoccupied.

'Some of the Church of Rome's work,' was

his first idea, and mentally he saw poor Marie torn from her friends, and a richly-endowed convent looming in the distance! Still, it might be otherwise; and as many families have a living grief—some ghastly skeleton with which the dearest friend may not intermeddle—so Marie and her mother were probably in great trouble on account of a relative.

The evening dragged slowly on, but it was so unlike past happy hours in the same room, that Philip rubbed his eyes, and once or twice fancied he was dreaming.

By and bye Marie turned to him, saying, with forced gaiety, 'I am not entertaining to-night, but let us try if the harp will speak to you in more lively strains.'

Seating herself at the instrument, she played one after another of Philip's favourite airs, choosing the songs he liked best.

In the meantime the Countess sat silently at *the* window, her face concealed by the white

curtains, while big tears rolled down her cheeks. Supper was brought in, and during the meal she exerted herself to talk to Philip about his father, suggesting, with womanly tact, one or two little plans for his comfort.

Cheerfulness was in a measure restored, and Philip, observing the lateness of the hour, was about to say 'Good-night,' when the door opened noiselessly, and Father Antonio took his seat at the table.

A melancholy, determined look met the frown which Philip's good-breeding failed to restrain on the priest's entrance.

'I have been engaged at the Confessional since we parted,' he said, addressing the Countess in a low voice.

'Have supper now; you look exhausted,' was her answer.

Marie was passing some chicken and salad, but he quietly put the plate aside, saying, 'No luxuries for me, Signorina, until after Easter,'

I shall take some hard biscuit and a glass of water.'

'Do you consider such abstinence necessary?' Philip asked, with some impatience of manner.

'Yes ; I find it good to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection.'

'Indeed !' was the cold response ; 'then I fear we shall never agree.'

'Perhaps not, sir ; but I trust the day may come when all shall be of one mind in these important matters.'

Philip shook his head incredulously, and taking leave of his friends in a constrained manner, he was soon walking with rapid strides towards his home. The peaceful moonlight scene around jarred on his troubled thoughts, and a storm would have been more welcome. But he resolved that his father should know nothing of his apprehensions. Any agitation was bad for him ; besides, hope whispered, '*Your fears may be groundless.*'

Days went on, and, alas! the mystery grew deeper.

Marie was constantly occupied with religious duties, while Father Antonio, like a dark spectre, haunted her home, and his superior, a portly-looking bishop, was also a frequent visitor. She and her mother occasionally called on the invalid, but they contrived to see him at hours when they knew Philip was likely to be absent.

Marie's pale looks did not escape Mr. Walton's notice, and one day, after she had been singing to him, he said kindly, 'You are working too hard, dear child; do take care of your health.'

'I have not been well,' was the answer; then, in a half whisper, and with a smile of touching sadness, she added, 'I shall be better by and bye.'

'I hope so; and I think a ride might do you good.'

Philip entered the room at that moment, and, looking towards him, Mr. Walton continued, 'That lazy fellow will take you out some morning.'

'Certainly ; and may I order your favourite bay horse ?' asked Philip, trying to throw somewhat of the old heartiness into his tones.

Marie coloured, then with a coldness, which was evidently assumed, she said shortly, 'I have not time for riding at present.' There was a pause, and she continued, 'The Rayburns are to have a charming riding-party to-morrow, and they asked me to persuade you to join them.'

Philip knew that Marie referred to an English Protestant family who were their mutual friends, but, wounded by her manner, he was in no hurry to reply.

'Easter will be here immediately,' observed Mr. Walton ; 'and I hope to see you all enjoying yourselves again.'

Marie rose to take leave, and Philip followed her in silence to the door, and along the garden-walk leading from the house.

At length Marie stopped, and holding out her hand she said very quietly, and with a half-averted glance, 'Good-bye, Mr. Walton.'

Philip scarcely touched the offered hand, his adieu was inaudible, and in a few minutes Marie had vanished out of sight.

'Cold as marble, and heartless too, I begin to think!' were the angry words which escaped him, as he paced the garden, vexed with himself, with Marie, and all the world besides.

Alas! he did not know that she whom he censured was at that moment weeping bitterly. The evening sunset witnessed her pouring out her 'sinful worldly feelings' into the ear of her confessor, and the early morning found her holding a solitary vigil, repeating the 'Confiteor' and numerous 'Ave Marias.'

Hard are the services which Rome exacts

from her votaries, and all unlike the religion of Jesus, whose 'yoke is easy and His burden light.'

Philip had little inclination to join the riding party which we mentioned, but his horse was brought to the door at the accustomed hour, and he rode out, he knew or cared not whither. No arrangement had been made with the Rayburns, and yet apparently the fates decreed their meeting, for about mid-day Philip was reining in his chestnut steed, and walking it slowly alongside of Miss Rayburn and her brother. A pleasant little party of six, with a cool fresh day, made the exercise charming. All were intimate friends, and they talked of many things; but the engrossing subject, and one which for Philip had only too painful an interest, was Marie de Tours's estrangement from her friends.

Our readers will not be surprised to learn that one after another rallied Philip on his

ignorance in the fair lady's matters, until the poor fellow winced under their remarks. By and bye Miss Rayburn, who was proverbially good natured, and really loved Marie, drew him aside, saying, 'Mr. Walton, I feel convinced that the leagued powers of the Church of Rome are at work in this business. Signor Antonio and others are compelling the poor girl to believe that the dreary cloister is her vocation, and that God demands her fortune for the Church.' Then looking at him steadily, she continued, 'Forgive my suggestion, but knowing that you are a friend of Marie's, let me advise you to lay aside all false delicacy, or pride, as the case may be, and simply to ask Marie what it all means? Who knows but that the friendly voice of reason, when spoken in kindness, may arrest the progress of a fatal step, which, if once taken, all who know our dear Marie will deplore.'

Philip did not promise, but Miss Rayburn's words had the desired effect; and after sleep-

less nights, and many half-formed plans, he resolved to see Marie alone, and to hear from herself the cause of the change which had come over her.

Easter was past, and the first of May had come, but the weather continued balmy and pleasant. There were no symptoms of the sirocco or south-east wind, which is extremely relaxing and very common in Naples during the latter month. Philip had risen early, and after a long walk and a scanty breakfast, he found himself in the Countess's drawing-room. A mass of white flowers and ferns, which were tastefully arranged in the different vases, met his eye, but the boudoir was unoccupied. Passing on to the room behind he found no one, but the door of Marie's studio was half open, and he felt irresolute as to the propriety of entering. At length he knocked gently; there was no answer, but an irresistible impulse induced him to look in. Hitherto he had been

a privileged visitor in the little sanctum, and some of his unfinished sketches were lying in one of the portfolios. This morning Marie was sitting in her favourite chair, but her paint-box was shut, her head buried in her hands, and she sobbed as if her heart would break. Philip felt himself an intruder, and yet he could not go back, so he knocked again more loudly, and addressed Marie by her name. She raised her head, but Philip was not prepared for the ashy paleness and the fixed expression of despair which her lovely features wore. Silently she rose to shake hands with him, there was no animation in her countenance, and she moved as if in a waking dream. Most people would have been chilled by the strange reception, but impelled by a strong impulse, and unable to bear suspense any longer, Philip said warmly, 'Mademoiselle de Tours, I see that you are unhappy, I have feared it for a long time, but your manner kept me silent; and now, as the

son of your mother's oldest friend, forgive me when I ask the cause. And believe me when I add, that there is nothing which I will not do to help you, and, if it be possible, to make you like your old self again.' The young girl started with a look of pain, tears glistened in her eyes, and a more life-like expression returned to her sad face. 'Do tell me,' Philip added very quietly.

In a moment Marie became calm, and in a low hollow voice she replied, 'The struggle is over now, and true peace will come, for the holy Church has conquered. When you came in I suffered from weakness, and you found me grieving at the thoughts of parting with my mother.' Taking no notice of Philip's looks of grave surprise, she proceeded, 'The blessed Mother of God, and her Son our Saviour, have called me to leave the world's temptations, and to give my life and fortune to the cause of Christ and His Church.' Then glancing

upwards, and speaking in firmer tones, she added, 'In a few weeks I shall enter a convent.'

The dreaded blow fell at last, and Rome had done its work. The bright warm-hearted girl looked the wreck of her former self, and filial ties and human affections must all be sacrificed. 'Impossible! and can this be real?' were the first words which broke from Philip. There was no reply. Then taking Marie's hand, as it lay motionless on her lap, he said with vehemence, 'You speak of your mother, but do you realize the utter desolation which this life-banishment must cause to her?'

'I have committed my mother, and all dear to me, to Almighty God, and He will help me to keep the resolution I have now made.'

Philip tried one argument after another, seeking to convince Marie that she could serve God more acceptably by remaining in her present sphere of usefulness, but alas, his expostulations

were in vain. Fain would he have expressed his fears that she was a dupe in the hands of the Church of Rome, which desired to enrich its coffers by her fortune. But her evident distress prevented him from making any severe remark, and knowing her decision of character, and that she believed herself to be following the dictates of Heaven, he felt that the case was sadly hopeless. And yet, as a drowning man catches at a straw, he noticed that the rigid expression which her face wore at first was gone, and that tears flowed freely while he was speaking. Looking at her earnestly, he said, 'Marie, if you go away, we may not meet again ; but remember that you influenced a thoughtless fellow in what was good, that he began to *believe* in religion such as yours, and that now he sees nothing in it but a blind enthusiasm which threatens to drag a dearly loved one from her home and her friends. Oh ! *pause*, for the sake of those who love you ;

pause and think again before you enter a living tomb.'

'Urge me no longer,' said the poor girl in a voice of agony; and gently withdrawing the hand which Philip held, she rose from her seat, clasping her hands as if invoking aid from heaven, and exclaiming, 'God Almighty knows what bitter woe my earthly longings cost me, and how vainly I strove to see *duty* in lingering here with those I loved. At one time all was dark, but a flood of light came, and God pointed me to the peaceful convent, as the only way to a purer rest above.'

'Your face bears the traces of great sorrow, dear Marie, but why did you never speak of it to your friends?'

'Our Church forbids us to talk indiscriminately about sacred subjects. My sinful heart often wished to unburden itself, but our religion teaches that self-denial in all things is a blessed discipline.'

Bitter words regarding the hateful system were rising to Philip's lips, but he suppressed them with a groan.

Marie felt unwilling to prolong the painful interview, and, speaking in her old sweet tones, she said, 'Farewell, Philip, never think of my peaceful home as a "living tomb," but believe that I am at rest there, and that I never forget the dear ones here. Oh ! no ; it shall be my earnest prayer that we may all meet at last.'

Philip pressed her to his heart in a fond embrace, and after his whispered 'Farewell,' she glided from the room.

Throwing himself on a couch, he wept like a child, then, suddenly remembering the lateness of the hour, he was hurrying out of the house, when Father Antonio stood before him.

A stiff bow was exchanged, and Philip was passing on, when the priest stopped him with these words—'I presume, sir, that you have been

made acquainted with Mademoiselle De Tours's determination ?'

'Yes ; I know all.' He then added, sternly, 'I know that Rome has secured an unsuspecting victim, and that her priests are about to complete their desolating work.'

'You speak strangely, sir ; but those of another faith cannot understand the glorious end in view ; and of course they do not realize the blessed life of self-dedication to which God is calling our young friend.'

'Say not "those of another faith," Signor Antonio ; I have no faith at all ; and black deeds like these help to strengthen infidelity. Had Mademoiselle De Tours been a pauper, the Church of Rome would have left her unmolested.'

An angry glance was the only retort. The priest deemed himself insulted, and Philip acted wrongly ; but his inmost feelings were outraged, and in the impulse of the moment he wreaked

his ire on one who was only obeying the mandate of a corrupt Church, the laws of which are inflexible, and to her system every true child must bow unquestioningly.

An Italian by birth, and somewhat wily in his nature, Signor Antonio became an easy tool in the Church's hands. Deep plotting and mystery had a charm for him, and he considered any means, however deceitful, to be legitimate, if there was a good end in view. In poor Marie's case, his task, although painful, had been comparatively simple. Circumstances favoured the Church's plans, and at length the young girl professed herself willing to take the veil. It was true that her mother was broken-hearted, but as Marie was of age, neither she nor her other guardians had power to prevent the step.



CHAPTER VII.

A FATHER'S DEATH.

MR. WALTON and his son were unusually silent at dinner that evening, and scarcely had the domestics retired when the old gentleman said, 'Philip, there is something wrong.'

Concealment was no longer necessary, and in few words Philip told the sad story.

'This *is* a blow,' was the quiet answer, 'and worse in my opinion than what my brother Fenwick is experiencing.'

'Have you heard from my uncle?' Philip asked.

‘Yes ; and he writes in bad spirits. You know that your cousin Philip has long been unsettled in his religious views, and now he has declared himself a priest of Rome. Considering his talents, better things might have been expected, and with your uncle’s influence he would probably have taken a high position in the Church of England. The affair is a great grief to them all, but *on dit* that “out of evil good often comes,” and Fenwick is at last discovering the estimable qualities of Emily’s husband. At present the despised curate, who is sincere, and a thorough gentleman, seems to be his right hand, and, on my favourite Emily’s account, I rejoice at the fact ; besides,’ he added with a sigh, ‘one begins to find that wealth and position cannot buy happiness.’

‘I was a boy,’ remarked Philip, ‘when we met Mr. Lovewood, but he seemed clever, and a good sort of fellow, who kept his eyes and his ears open, taking an interest in every subject ;

and although I dare say he knew every dark hole in the dreary back lanes of Westminster, yet he never wearied one with district experiences. Poor Phil, on the contrary, was always talking "shop," but I confess that the reformation of the Church, rather than the wants of the poor, occupied his attention. A fine mess he has made of it all !' Then, after reflection, and with some bitterness in his tones, Philip added, 'Yes ; I pity uncle, for once in the shackles of Rome, and his son is lost to him for ever !'

Neither spoke for some time.

At last Mr. Walton asked a few questions about Marie—'To which convent was she going ?' and 'how soon ?'

Philip did not know the exact day ; but he named the convent of —, about which both of them had heard. Its rules were said to be rigid, the style of living very simple, and in Roman Catholic circles it was whispered that

its funds were low, so Marie's fortune would be doubly welcome.

After that evening Marie was seldom named. There are certain plants which shrink from touch or scrutiny, and certain griefs will not bear condolence. Mr. Walton's sympathy with Philip was deep and true ; but he knew that he showed it most, and pleased him best, when the words remained unspoken.

The Countess and her daughter went little out of doors ; both were making lame efforts to be cheerful. Marie paid no visits, and only received those friends with whom she was very intimate. Private conversation with members of the Protestant faith was at present censured by her spiritual advisers, and in her case this was equivalent to a prohibition. The Rayburns, to whom we before alluded, never saw her alone, and although Philip and she again met occasionally, their interviews were inevitably *constrained*. Father Antonio or a brother priest

was generally hovering near them, or, if their other duties called them away, the poor Countess sat by, and in a choking voice she tried to tell Philip that she 'felt resigned, and that she was praying for strength to bear her trial as she ought.'

'And you'll get it, mother mine,' whispered Marie, kissing her cheek.

Philip paid his last visit, while unconscious of the fact, and Marie could not tell him.

A feigned cheerfulness characterized her manner that day. One or two visitors were in the room; and seated at a small writing-table Father Antonio was apparently engrossed in reading several sheets of closely written parchment; but not a word or movement of Marie's escaped his notice, and stealthy glances from his keen dark eyes were being constantly directed towards her. Philip saw no chance of a few quiet words, and feeling sad and weary he rose to go. While he was saying a

general adieu, Marie moved to the window, and plucked a white rose-bud from her favourite bush. It might be a gift for Philip, or his invalid father, but rising from his seat, and bending over her with a low bow, Signor Antonio took the flower from her hand. He then placed it at the foot of an exquisite statue of the Madonna, saying, in a determined voice, 'Let it lie there, my child.'

Marie made no resistance, but holding out her hand to Philip, she murmured a quiet 'good-bye;' and often afterwards did he recall the earnest look with which her eyes followed him to the door.

Next morning nearly every one in Naples was talking about the departure of the beautiful heiress, and one or two who happened to be early astir, saw a cabriolet with the blinds drawn down driving away from the Countess's villa; but the Waltons were within doors, and the doctor, who was their only visitor, being no

gossip, they heard nothing of what had happened. Philip took his usual walk in the evening, and as he was turning down a narrow pathway Marie's old nurse stood before him. The poor woman's eyes looked blood-shot, and her face was seared from the effects of weeping. Philip wished her a kindly 'good-evening,' and was moving on, when she asked, 'Do you know, sir, that my young lady has gone?'

'Gone!' groaned Philip, 'when did she leave home?'

'Shortly after sunrise. Father Antonio fixed that time, as being quiet; and strange to say, sir, after many restless nights, the Countess slept this morning, and so she was saved the parting. Mademoiselle Marie just slipped into the room to look at her, and when the dear lamb knelt at her mother's bed-side, she had such a resigned angel look on her white face, that my heart was quite broke. Ah, sir, it is a

sad fate, and all so different from what I expected for my sweet mistress.'

'Who accompanied Mademoiselle de Tours to the convent?' asked Philip.

'Father Antonio and the Bishop whom you have met at our house.'

'Does the Countess expect permission to visit her daughter?'

'Ah, sir, they have made a kind of a promise, but I *has* my doubts on the subject.'

'I fear, Mrs. Thorn, that you can scarcely be deemed a good Catholic,' remarked Philip with a grim smile.

'It's them hidden things that has shook my faith, sir. I becomed a Papist to please the Countess, when she brought me from England to live in Paris, but somehow I feel different since these last few weeks, and he will be a clever priest who can make me confess now-a-days.'

'I don't wonder, my good woman, for you have been sadly tried.' After a pause, Philip

added, 'Should the Countess hear that you have seen me to-night, pray remember me most kindly to her.'

'I shall do that, sir,' answered Mrs. Thorn, dropping a low curtesy. A deep sigh from Philip did not escape her notice, and looking after him as he walked away, the good woman thus soliloquized, 'And it is a sad heart you have, young man, but I wish you had been quicker, and you might have rescued my dear lady from the priest's clutches. Alas! she is in the *prison* now, and you are in despair. I begged her for one little message for you, but she said that you knew her feelings, and with one of the sad sweet looks that always went to my heart, she added, "You forget, nurse, that I am done with earth now."'

Mr. Rayburn was sitting with Mr. Walton when Philip returned, and the news was already communicated. From him Mr. Walton learned that the lady-superior of Marie's convent was a

gentlewoman of high rank. She was supposed to have known great sorrow, and Romanists talked of her as being renowned for her sanctity. The only time that Marie spoke to Mr. Rayburn about her self-imposed 'vocation,' she mentioned '*la bonne Mère Angelique*,' and expressed a hope that she might 'gain strength and guidance from her blessed companionship.'

Alas! poor girl, she was doomed to disappointment; but we may not anticipate, and in the meantime, Marie is concealed from our readers and the world by the iron railings and tall trees which surround the massive pile of building that she now calls her home.

And what of Philip? As when a fierce wind devastates the garden's beauty, throwing its bright flowers to the ground, so did the scheming of the Romanists, and the withdrawal of Marie's gentle influence, crush and blight his better feelings. For some time he looked upon religion as a fair picture, but now he turned

from it in disgust, and infidelity planted its roots more deeply in his heart. Alas! he was still a stranger to the Father of Light, and the eye of his faith was not opened that he might 'see Jesus:' and yet, as in gospel days, when the Saviour walked to Emmaus with the two disciples, although they saw Him not, the same gracious Presence was hovering near, watching over each step in Philip's journey, and in God's own time, which is the best, He will change the darkness into light.

Another sorrow, which Philip had long dreaded, seemed to be coming nearer. Day by day his father's strength declined, but acute suffering was mercifully lessened, while the invalid appeared calm, and at times almost cheerful. To Philip he talked a great deal about Fairley Hall, suggesting improvements that might be made on the property, and sending messages to all the old people who remembered him. The good old vicar, to whom we briefly

alluded in the beginning of the story, was dead, and his successor being hopelessly ill, Mr. Walton expressed a wish that in the event of his death, Philip should use his influence in behalf of Mr. Lovewood, his cousin's husband. His natural indolence was giving place to a mental energy hitherto unknown; and Philip and he spent many pleasant hours in recalling his favourite authors, and discussing their respective merits.

'Come, Philip, it seems a shame to waste this lovely sunshine within doors,' was the old gentleman's remark one morning, while Philip sat drawing in a listless manner; 'and don't think of leaving me,' he added kindly, 'for I expect to have a visit from a minister in a little.'

'Not a priest, father?' asked Philip, raising his eyebrows with a look of horror.

'Nay, nay, my boy; but you know Mr. Evershade, the Rayburns' friend, who comes to see

me occasionally. He promised to look in this morning.' Then in a lower tone he said, 'I like his visits, and he reminds me of your mother's favourite, the late vicar at old Fairley.'

Only once before, when very ill, had Mr. Walton named his wife, and the word fell strangely on Philip's ear. 'Evershade is a decent fellow,' he replied, 'but I hope he won't be long-winded, and wear you out, *padre*.'

'No fear of that, and to keep your mind easy I shall take my luncheon before you leave me.'

Philip enjoyed a long ramble in the '*Villa Reale*,' or royal gardens, bordering the bay; he met a number of friends, so time slipped on, and he came home feeling cheered and freshened. Mr. Evershade had left, and he found the invalid asleep, his hand resting on a little Testament, which Philip had seen him reading lately. The book was open, and glancing over the page, he observed that one of the thin fingers pointed to these words in the sixth

chapter of St. John's Gospel, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'

Presently the old gentleman opened his eyes, and smiling on his son, he said, 'Will you help me into bed? I shall rest better there.'

The afternoon went on, but sleep did not return, and by and bye Mr. Walton's mind began to wander. He fancied himself at Fairley Hall, and the old loved scenes seemed to come before him. Then, as if remembering that for him all *that* was past, he murmured, 'It is yours now, my boy; oh! try to be a better master than I have been.' A quiet half-hour followed, and all at once the weary face lighted up with a smile.

Philip bent over his father, but he did not seem to observe him, and, lifting his eyes upwards, he whispered, 'I am coming, Helen.'

A sudden paleness overspread his features, and, with the name which he loved best on his lips, Mr. Walton passed into the Silent Land.

We may not trace the spirit's flight, nor can

we pierce the veil that hides from us the unseen world. God be praised if Heaven's light came at evening-time! And God be praised more when the earnest Christian life leaves no room for doubt, and needs no deathbed testimony!

A few weeks afterwards, and Philip bade adieu to that land, which for him was fraught with painful interest.

He parted with a number of kind friends, and mutual good wishes were exchanged.

The Countess de Tours he often visited; but she looked ill and dispirited. One little note from Marie, received two days after her departure, contained nearly all that the poor lady knew about her daughter. Marie wrote that she had been 'kindly welcomed by the reverend mother and the sisterhood;' and in a few loving words she committed her parent to the 'care of Almighty God.'

'Have the priests given you no recent information?' asked Philip.

‘Father Antonio assures me that my child is well and happy; and he tells me that my having no direct communication at present is in order to teach me submission.’

Philip uttered something like an oath, and then said that he would ‘call on Signor Antonio. I shall insist,’ he added, ‘that you either receive letters from your daughter, or that you are allowed to visit her occasionally.’

‘All would be useless,’ answered the Countess, and with tears she implored Philip to take no steps in the matter.

He reluctantly promised, and they parted with an assurance that each was to write occasionally, and that any news of Marie was to be communicated to Philip.





CHAPTER VIII.

PHILIP AT HOME AGAIN.

BLEAMS of warm sunshine were streaming through the half-open blinds, and dancing on the walls of the old breakfast-room at Fairley Hall. In a comfortable arm-chair, Philip Walton was seated at his morning meal, and sure we are that no lady's fingers could have improved the dainty neatness of the breakfast-table, or arranged more tastefully the bouquet of roses which formed its centre-piece.

Good Mrs. Williams was alive and hearty, and, despite a rheumatic knee, she considered

it a high privilege to toddle up and down stairs, ministering to the comforts of her 'dear young master.'

At ten o'clock the oak door was slowly opened, and the approach of the butler with the letter-bag was heralded by the sharp bark of a black-and-tan terrier, which has leapt on Philip's knee, and is demurely helping himself to some morsels of toast.

Half-an-hour afterwards Philip was sauntering through the pleasure-grounds, and, with a newly-lighted cigar in his mouth, he is digesting the contents of a long letter from Sidney Harvey. Our old friend did not write brightly. On the contrary, Philip read through a chapter of disasters. Business was dull, and he had lost large sums of money through his wife's relations. His brothers-in-law had been gambling to an enormous extent, and after ruining their poor father, they forged Harvey's signature, in order to draw money. This stratagem was

once or twice enforced, until, in self-defence, Harvey made an exposure of the facts, and thereby prevented any repetition of their crime. A tone of unhappiness breathed throughout the poor fellow's epistle. His wife's name was never mentioned, and although he concluded by kindly urging Philip to visit him, yet he held out little inducement. 'Poor Harvey, I might comfort him,' were Philip's first thoughts. There was also a letter from the Rev. Mr. Walton, declining to visit his nephew, as he was going to Brighton, and as improvements were about to begin in the old mansion-house Philip would be free for a little time. But another note, the last in the letter-bag, must not be overlooked ; it came from Mrs. Graham, the only surviving sister of Philip's mother. Philip had not seen the old Scotch lady since he was a boy, but she wrote in a kind womanly style, urging him to join her and her family at Arran, and promising that he might

fish, and roam *ad libitum* through the lovely island.

The epistle suited Philip's frame of mind, and to him there was rest and freshness in the idea of heather hills and the blue sea. Shaking the ashes from his cigar, he resolved to say 'Yes,' and began playfully to hum, 'I'll steer my bark to *Arran's* (Erin's) Isle.' A hearty assent to the good lady's invitation was accordingly penned. Afterwards, in a friendly letter, he wished Harvey more prosperous days, and enclosed a draft for a handsome sum of money, saying that it was a 'gift for his little name-son, whose acquaintance he hoped to make by and bye. A visit to Scotland,' he added, 'must be his first movement.'

In the meantime the gardener, the woodman, carpenters, and masons were working busily at Fairley Hall. The grim-looking lions in the massive gateway were growing worn and defaced; parts of the mansion-house needed

repairs ; wild flowers were peeping up everywhere, and the spreading trees told plainly that the woodman's axe and pruning-knife had lain idly by. But eager hearts and hands were ready to carry out Philip's suggestions, and his heart warmed to the old place, although it awoke a chord of sadness there, for his sensitive nature was still feeling the blank which the loss of his father's close companionship made. Quiet and courteous in his manners, he won all hearts, and the old retainers looked with pride on their young Squire. Stenhouse, the trusty gamekeeper, again enjoyed long talks with his master ; and a heap of stones, over which a few creepers were annually trained, now marked the spot where poor Bounce, the companion of his boyish rambles, was buried. Open-handed and open-hearted, not even a few discontented churls, who were cumberers on the estate, found an opportunity of picking holes in Philip Walton. And yet one little circumstance

regarding him pained the more thoughtful of his tenants. Sunday after Sunday the large crimson-covered pew belonging to the Walton family remained empty, and Philip either rambled through the woods whistling to his dog, or took a long ride on horseback. In vain did the dignified Mrs. Williams try to silence remarks, by saying, 'You forget that we have only an ignorant curate to do duty during our rector's illness, but wait until an intelligent man is appointed, and you will see my master in church.'

When Philip told the good lady of his intention to visit Mrs. Graham in Scotland, her face beamed with pleasure, and afterwards speaking her thoughts aloud, she said, 'Foreign parts has *disimproved* Mr. Walton in some respects, but Mrs. Graham is like my sainted mistress, and, please God, she may lead the young man's mind to better things. Much learning often unsettles one. My master stopped so long in

the Pope's country, that I feared he might turn Papist, but alas! he has no faith at all; and our good old vicar used to tell me that such cases were more sad than belief in error. Oh dear! oh dear!' sighed the poor woman; then, wiping her eyes with a corner of her apron, she quietly ended the soliloquy with this remark, 'I know that God answers prayer, and we shall hope the best.'

Philip Walton was the child of many prayers. Often during his early years had the old house-keeper seen her loved mistress bending over his cot, and from her look and attitude she knew that she was holding communion with her Father in heaven, and that she was giving her little one into His safe keeping. She remembered too, that when the tide of life was ebbing, those who stood near the dying mother heard her whispered prayer, 'Jesus, I can leave my boy with Thee.' God hears the believer's faintest knock, and that cry of faith was wafted to His throne.



CHAPTER IX.

LILY OF THE GLEN AND HER WORK.

THE last rays of an autumn sun were falling upon Brodick shore, and the merry song of the reapers was heard as the harvest day was closing. Arran's range of mountains, with their dark outline, formed a bold contrast to the glowing sky, while the pure waters with their ceaseless ripple added to the beauty of the scene. Here and there the white spray rose from the oar of some little boat, as it moved quietly along, and the ferryman was hastening towards a steamer, which he descried in the distance. Presently the boat was crowded

to its stern, and groups were seen winding down the glen, or wandering over the rocks to await its approach. A cheerful bustle might be observed at the place of landing, while joyous little voices and bright faces were welcoming a father's return from the city, and friend met friend with kindly greeting.

A tall dark stranger, of slightly foreign air, stepped ashore, talking in pleasant tones to his travelling companion, and smilingly assenting to the latter's warm praises of the lovely island. 'I assure you,' said the distinguished-looking personage, whom on a nearer scrutiny we discover to be Philip Walton, 'that no foreign scene which I have witnessed makes me insensible to Scotland's beauty.'

'That is right,' was the reply; and tracing a resemblance to Philip in the manly countenance of the speaker, we quickly guess that he is conversing with his cousin, Mr. Walter Graham.

By and bye Philip was welcomed to a pretty simple cottage, and the sentences which follow give our readers a brief description of the Graham family.

Philip's aunt was a gentle old lady, whose presence brought with it a feeling of rest. Hers was a hopeful, loving nature, and her character combined child-like simplicity with a remarkable degree of talent and intelligence. Joy and sorrow were mingled in her cup, but her calm brow and bright smile told of a peace that was reflected from above. And those who could read the old lady's thoughts knew that in clouds or sunshine her heart was resting on its God. Five years had passed away since the death of Mr. Graham, an excellent clergyman, made her a widow. Some of her children were married, and others had gone to the Better Land, but the society of two sons and a daughter was now cheering the evening of her life. Walter, the youngest son, was engaged

in mercantile pursuits, while John, the elder brother, had been a doctor in the army, but having lost his health in India, he was now seeking its restoration among his native hills. Annie, the youngest and only unmarried daughter, was a shy, thoughtful girl—one of those persons who glide almost unobserved through life, and yet she was so perfectly unselfish, and mindful of the wants of others, that all who knew her loved her.

As a family the Grahams were clever, and Philip soon found that the tastes and pursuits of his hitherto unknown cousins coincided very nearly with his own. All that he saw augured for him a pleasant visit. It was true that love to God was the ruling principle in the house, guiding the actions of each member, but there was no ostentation in the Grahams' religion. They were aware of Philip's sentiments, and in the meantime they avoided any discussion on religious subjects, choosing rather to speak for

Jesus by a quiet consistent walk than by the noise of words.

We have seen that poor Philip was a despiser of creeds ; nevertheless he paid a respectful deference to all who held them, and while a visitor at Mrs. Graham's house he was never absent during family worship.

A few evenings after his arrival, he was rowing his aunt in a little boat, and finding on his return to the house that the rest of the party were not within doors, he left Mrs. Graham, saying, 'I have a mind to explore one of these lovely glens, for everything looks so still and grand in this twilight.'

'Do go ; I know you will enjoy a ramble,' said the old lady ; 'and if you stay very late,' she added with a smile, 'we shall send Walter in search of you.'

The calm beauty of the outer world exerted a soothing influence upon Philip that evening, and it seemed as if the kind Father of all were

bending lovingly over His creatures, and yearning in tender pity after those who knew Him not.

After a short stroll along the shore, Philip rested on a bridge from whence he could survey the surrounding beauty, and by and bye he began to wend his way up Glen Cloy.

Two little Irish boys, who were bringing their master's cattle home from the fields, joined him, and with characteristic frankness they offered to act as pioneers, greatly amusing him by their witty remarks, which were spoken with a half-Irish, half-Highland accent.

At length they reached a farm-house, to which one or two small and rudely-thatched cottages were attached. Philip stopped there for a moment to look back, and admire the wooded glen.

And just then a low sweet voice broke through the stillness, and the first lines of

this hymn were borne softly on the evening air—

‘Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light ;
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Beneath Thine own Almighty wings !’

Philip’s heart thrilled with a sacred awe as he listened, and he seemed to feel the ‘touch of a vanished hand’ laid quietly on his brow. His mother’s loved form rose before him, and with memory’s eye he saw again the little room where she bent over his pillow, and he remembered how she sang the same old hymn. Trust in Heaven’s guardian care was then instilled, and even yet he could recall the feelings of peace which came with his mother’s fond ‘Good-night.’

Silently Philip listened until the last verse of the hymn was sung, then, turning to his companions as the sound died away, he asked, ‘Do you know, my lads, who lives in that

cottage where some one has been singing so sweetly ?’

‘Och sir,’ exclaimed the elder boy, ‘have ye never heard o’ wee Lily o’ the Glen ? Sure and everybody kens *her*.’

‘Plaise yer honour,’ rejoined his companion, ‘I’ll take ye to the door, for she is no very well, and she likes to see folk.’

‘Thank you,’ said Philip, smiling ; ‘I shall be happy to speak to the little girl.’

‘Lily is thirteen going fourteen,’ continued the boy ; ‘but she is no big, and they say she is in a decline.’

A grassy bypath, overgrown with bramble and wild rose, brought the party to the door of the little cottage. And there, seated on a low bench, was a young and interesting-looking girl. One could scarcely imagine a creature more fragile than wee Lily. Her pale features were shaded by her sunny hair, and her dark-brown eyes were singularly bright and expressive. Just

then she was evidently rapt in thought, while the clasped hands, the upturned brow, and lips slightly parted, reminded Philip of the picture of some guardian saint. A venerable old man was sitting beside her with a Bible on his knee, and a kindly-looking woman, who might be his daughter, had just placed a basin of warm milk and some oatmeal cakes on a table near.

The approach of visitors was concealed from the group by a hawthorn-tree, and Lily started as the two boys stood before her, calling out in merry tones, 'Here we are, and you'll have to teach us a tune!'

Her face lighted up with a happy smile, then, observing a stranger standing near, she coloured and remained silent.

Anxious to relieve her embarrassment, Philip remarked, 'I like the hymn you have been singing very much, so I asked the boys to bring me here.'

Lily looked pleased, and the old man politely



‘A venerable old man was sitting beside Lily with a Bible on his knee.’
—*PHILIP WALTON*, page 130.

rose and offered Philip a seat beside his granddaughter.

The boys ran away to look at a bee-hive in the garden, and the older people having both retired, Philip was left alone with the little girl. 'Do you often sing hymns?' he asked.

'Yes; very often,' said Lily; 'for it makes me feel happy, and I forget the pain.'

'You seem very happy,' Philip said dreamily.

Lily cast a shy look towards her companion; then, glancing upwards, and apparently gathering strength and confidence from some reflection, she said earnestly, 'Oh yes; for my Father puts so many happy thoughts about His love into my mind. But you see I can't tell them right in my poor way, and the hymns help me to praise His goodness.'

'I suppose you have been ill for a long time, Lily?'

'Yes; for more than two years. I was ill in Glasgow at the time my father and mother died

there, and grandfather brought me to this pretty place, hoping that the fine air would cure me. But the pain still hurts, and the cough will come.' Then, with a sweet smile, she added, 'I shall be quite well some day, for I am going to a land where they never feel sick. I often dream that Jesus is coming to take me home, so I know I have not long to wait.'

Here, then, mused Philip, is Christian faith, firm and bright, spoken by a feeble child. And as he listened he wondered, yet did not dare to thrust one doubt upon a heart which was so pure and trusting. 'I shall come again to see you,' he said kindly to the little girl; 'and if you are not too tired, perhaps you will sing another hymn to me before I bid you good-night.'

'Oh yes, sir,' Lily answered in glad tones. 'I'll give you the one I like best.'

The boys, having now returned from their *race*, seated themselves on the grass at Lily's

feet, and the older people standing near, she sang these beautiful stanzas beginning—

‘ How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear !
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast ;
’Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.’

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Lily’s face and eyes brightened at the expression of each sentiment, and never did cathedral service, with its glorious *Magnificat* or anthem chanted by the finest choir, stir Philip’s heart more deeply. ‘ Thank you very much,’ he said quietly; then politely declining the old people’s request that he would stay to partake of their simple fare, he bade the little party a hurried ‘ Good-night.’

A few rapid strides, and he was near the foot

of the Glen. The stars were shining brightly, and by their light Philip descried Walter Graham, who was coming to meet him.

‘Hollo! old fellow,’ exclaimed his cousin. ‘What a pace you go at! but it’s lucky I have found you. My mother said very lucidly that you were in a glen, and as our island boasts of several, I did not know which way to turn.’

‘Here I am, then, all right,’ was the laughing reply.

‘Have you had a pleasant walk?’ asked Walter.

‘Very much so; I did not go far, resting often to admire the scenery, chatting to the peasantry, and so on.’

Men seldom weary their listeners with details, and deep must be their friendship before their inner feelings are exchanged. The incident of the evening had interested Philip greatly, and the simple faith of the little peasant-girl

was much in his thoughts. But our readers will not be surprised to learn that he did not tell his cousin of the interview with Lily. They walked along, enjoying the fine evening, and sometimes trying to recall their school knowledge of astronomy ; or, again, they were laughing good-naturedly at the Highland accent and odd mode of expression of a few fishermen who sat idly on the beach.

The next few days passed very pleasantly, while Philip and his cousins sauntered about with fishing-rod or sketch-books, as inclination or the weather might dictate.

Philip's first exploit was to ascend Goatfell, and there his love of nature was fully gratified by the glorious scenery around.

But the weather during our Scotch autumns is proverbially varied, and one sultry morning, as the Graham party were watching the heavy clouds, John remarked that the appearance of sea and sky indicated a thunder-storm ; ‘so

much so,' he added, 'that we must give up our expedition to Glen Sannox.'

'The day is not promising,' said Mrs. Graham; 'but what is your opinion, Philip? Remember, we promised to let you have your own way.'

'A charming position, my dear aunt; and you will think me an ungallant fellow when I reply that you and Annie must not venture. John, also, will be wise to avoid any risk of a ducking; but, if Walter does not object, I propose that he and I start at once. I am too old a traveller to be daunted by unpropitious weather; and each being armed with his waterproof and a staff, we shall get on bravely.'

'Agreed,' said Walter; and after a few preparations the two young men were walking leisurely towards Glen Sannox.

Philip had once or twice admired the beautiful glen in the distance; but the solitary grandeur of its rugged slopes presented a weird aspect that day. After rambling about for a

little time the pedestrians seated themselves. Philip chose a large grey stone as his resting-place, and while examining its dimensions he was suddenly dazzled by a bright flash of lightning. Thunder instantly followed, and as the storm grew louder, Walter suggested that they should seek a more sheltered spot. 'But it is no easy matter,' added he, 'to find such in the glen.'

At length they discovered a rudely-formed cave, and, scrambling within, they waited patiently until the end of the storm.

Few can walk abroad and feel unawed while thunder is rolling overhead. Philip had often witnessed storms, but to-day the thunder had a voice for him which he never heard before. Wee Lily's words had gone home to his heart, and now God was speaking to him in louder tones. His inmost soul was stirred, and as peal followed flash, these words kept ringing in his ears, 'The Lord reigneth.'

Ah! little did Walter Graham know that during that quiet half-hour in the glen a conflict was raging in the sceptic's breast. Unseen by mortal eye, the blessed Spirit, with its noiseless voice, was talking to him, and we believe that in Heaven there was a Saviour pleading.

At last, 'I can doubt in the existence of a God no longer,' became the language of Philip's heart.

The storm was succeeded by a perfect calm. The sky grew blue again, and as the rain-drops glistened on tree and flower, and the sun-beams shot across the glen, few could admire a lovelier scene. The first tints of a rainbow appeared overhead, and presently the sky was arched with its glorious colouring.

Nature is at all times a precious teacher, and with the quiet hush, and restoration of peaceful beauty to all around, these two words of wee Lily's came into Philip's mind—'My Father.' 'Would I could really breathe that prayer when

I look up to yonder blue sky !' he thought, then his great unworthiness, and the prayerless years, wherein our loving Father's name was never spoken but in mockery, seemed like a wall to rise before him, and full of sad thoughts he walked home almost in silence. His cousin observed his depression, but asked no questions, thinking perhaps that he felt tired; and, besides, each understood that best form of friendship, which can sometimes be expressed without words.

On their return to Brodick, the bay looked very bright and still, as if it had derived fresh beauty from the storm.

Kindly Mrs. Graham gave them a glad welcome; she had arranged a rowing-party for that evening, and having assembled a few young people, there was quite a concert in her little cottage.

Courteous and amiable in all his ways, Philip played and sang at his aunt's bidding; but his

cheerfulness on that occasion was assumed, and he longed for the quiet hour when he might retire to his own room. A wonderful change had passed over him during the morning's ramble, and, unlike Pilate in the Gospel story, he no longer asked himself the question, 'What is Truth?' Already he knew something of the blessed mystery, but he had not realized it in all its fulness. And thus, 'the Truth had not made him free.' Now, for the first time, he felt sin's thralldom. Like a heavy load, it was weighing on his soul, and the pure bright light from Calvary's Cross had not yet dawned upon him. Jesus, our Advocate with the Father, was still a stranger, and although wise in this world's lore, he knew not 'the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' In his perplexity he tried to pray. He tried, and failed. 'For me,' he thought, 'there is no gracious Father's smile; and I can see nothing but the frown of an angry God.'

Wee Lily's teaching had sown the precious seed of divine truth in Philip's heart, and he longed to learn more from the little child. Her bright faith was overshadowed by no dark clouds, and there was no saint-worship in her religion, for she rested simply on the Rock of Ages, and within this blessed hiding-place the weary man of the world desired to find a refuge.

'I must see Lily again,' was Philip's last thought, just as sleep was sealing his eyelids, and when the early morn was about to break.

Annie Graham was late in coming into the breakfast-room next morning, and in answer to her mother's gentle reprimand, she said, with a smile of apology, '*Pardonnez moi, Madame*, I have been talking to Shannon, the little Irish boy, who brings our supply of fish ; and do you know, he tells me that wee Lily has been very ill ; indeed some of the most alarming symptoms of her complaint have returned.'

‘Poor dear child, I am so sorry,’ said Mrs. Graham ; ‘and I cannot go to see her to-day, but we shall send her some flowers, and a few grapes.’

‘Let me take your gift to the little girl,’ Philip said with eagerness. The old lady’s face beamed as she thanked him, and expressed her pleasure at his intention of visiting their protégée. ‘I ought to tell you,’ continued Philip, ‘that I have already seen wee Lily. I was attracted by her singing, while taking a solitary stroll up Glen Cloy one evening, and two little cow-herds whom I met took me to the door of her cottage. The boys were Irish,’ he said, turning to Annie, ‘and possibly one of them may have been your friend.’

‘Very likely ; and did you talk to Lily?’ asked Annie.

‘Yes ; and I was much interested, for she appeared to be such a patient happy little soul.’

‘Lily is always the picture of happiness,’ remarked Mrs. Graham, ‘and yet she suffers a great deal. Many a lesson of patience have I learnt at her cottage, and even in her days of pain she meets us with a smile. God grant that my dear nephew may be taught Lily’s secret!’ was the old lady’s silent prayer, while she watched Philip leaving the house, and hastening away on his kind mission.

The morning breeze was blowing softly from the calm blue sea, and all nature looked green after yesterday’s rain. When Philip turned up the well-remembered glen, a thrush was singing on an old beech-tree, and the notes of the little songster, with the fresh beauty of the woods and hills, brought a feeling of gladness into his heart. Presently he met Lily’s grandfather, who was cutting grass by the way-side; and in answer to Philip’s inquiries, the old man said tearfully, ‘Ah, sir, our wee lassie is fast wearin’ awa’; she has lang been fit for bidin’ wi’ the

angels up yonder, and I doubt we canna keep her here. When I brought her to our puir hame, twa years past, I didna ken what a bright licht she wud be i' the house; and bairn tho' she is, I've larned muckle frae her.'

'I am going to see her now,' said Philip, 'so I shall pass on to your cottage.'

'She'll be proud o' yer veesit, sir,' observed the old man, raising his hat.

In a few minutes Philip had knocked at the door, and was admitted by the elderly woman whom he saw on his former visit. The little room was plain, and the ceiling low, yet it looked scrupulously clean; and the fuchsias which hung in graceful clusters at the open lattice gave an air of refinement to the whole. Wee' Lily, indeed, resembled the flower whose name she bore. Pale and weary she looked that day, and as she lay with her eyes closed, Philip fancied she was sleeping. At the sound of voices, however, she looked up, and when the

basket of fruit and flowers was placed near her, her face brightened with a smile of pleased surprise. 'These are from your friend, Mrs. Graham,' Philip said, 'and I have come to sit by you for a little. Do you remember me?'

'Yes, sir; I sang hymns to you, but I have been very ill since then, so ill, that one day I thought Jesus had really come for me.'

'And were you very happy, Lily?'

'Oh, yes! for when the cough was bad, and I could not breathe right, I felt that Jesus's arms were round me; and I thought if this is the dark valley, it is all light now.'

'I am afraid you feel sorry to be a little better again.'

'At first I did, but I prayed to my Father about it, and now I am willing to wait His time; and dear grandfather and auntie are very glad to have me here for a while yet.'

'Lily,' Philip said at length, 'I wish that I knew and loved your Father in Heaven.'

The child looked wonderingly ; then laying her small wasted hand on his, she said, in earnest tones, 'You *must* love Him, sir ; He gives us all things, and He spared not His own Son, but sent Him into the world to die for you and me, and every sinner.'

'Ah, Lily ! you don't know what a great sinner I am. For many years I did not believe in God at all, and now when I do believe, and wish to love Him, I cannot. You have seen a large boulder-stone lying in the glen, or on some hill, and my heart is just as hard.'

'Ay, sir, every heart is hard until Jesus melts it with His love.'

'Lily, when I try to remember all my sins, the number overpowers me, and I fear that I can never be forgiven, or the sinful past forgotten.'

'Here is a verse for you, sir, " I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy

sins." There are many other nice verses in the Bible about it, but I like that one best, telling that our Father will not even *remember* all the ill we have done.'

'I am going to ask you to do something for me, Lily.'

'What is it?'

'Will you pray that Jesus would put His love into my heart, and ask Him to teach me how I ought to pray?'

'Oh, yes!' said the child gladly, 'I like to speak to my Father, so I'll tell Him all, and He is never weary of listening. Sometimes I am too tired to say words, and then I lie still thinking about the love of God in Christ, and that rests me.'

'Were you taught at any school?' asked Philip, who was surprised at Lily's refined mode of expressing herself. He knew not that God's grace sheds its softening influence on the heart, and elevates the conversation of the lowliest.

‘Yes; I went to a school in Glasgow,’ she replied, ‘and since coming here Miss Graham has taught me a little. Last summer I used to read the Bible and the History of Scotland with her, and sometimes she played the harmonium to me, while I sang hymns.’

Philip noticed that the little face was growing more wan, so he said kindly, ‘Don’t speak any more, Lily, and here is a bunch of grapes, which you must eat.’ Her Bible lay open at the 23d Psalm, so he sat reading until she revived a little. God’s book had an interest for Philip which he never knew before: he no longer looked upon it as a mere subject for criticism; and as he was silently meditating on its blessed truths, Lily watched him with an earnest gaze.

When he rose to go, she took his hands in hers, saying, ‘I am only wee Lily, and have never learned all you know, but God once put *a thought* into my mind, and I think it will

help you. Before I was so ill grandfather used to take me down to the shore, and I sat for hours looking at the sea; and when I saw it rolling over sands and rocks, until every bit speck was covered, I thought, *this* minds me of the love of Christ. For that love flows out to every creature, and finds its way into far off lands.' Then hesitating, she said softly, 'I believe, sir, *that* love has reached *you*, and you have only to let it into your heart.'

Like the rippling of a stream to the traveller in the desert, Lily's words brought hope to the despairing soul. 'Thank you, Lily,' Philip said warmly; 'you have done me a great deal of good. I believe God sent me to this place that you might teach me.'

'Ah, sir, our Father is the best teacher; I can do very little, but I'll remember my promise.'



CHAPTER X.

CHRISTMAS AT FAIRLEY HALL.

TIME passed on ; and day by day wee Lily faded. At length all knew that she was about to wing her flight to the 'Better Country,' and even here in her long nights of pain, she seemed to have glimpses of the 'Nightless Land.' Her voice was now too weak to sing her Father's praises, but with a bright smile, she whispered, 'I know He has a golden harp for me, and in heaven I'll sing and never weary.' Philip was a frequent visitor at the little cottage, and when Lily was too ill to talk much, she would put

her Bible into his hands, saying, 'Please, sir, will you read a message to me from our Father?' Passages in Isaiah, and some of our Saviour's parting words to His disciples, with one or two beautiful Psalms, were selected by the ministering child. And before her young 'light went out,' she had the happiness of knowing that Philip knew and loved her Father in heaven; for the boundless ocean of a Saviour's love had penetrated the depths of his once hard and unbelieving heart.

Quiet and gradual was the outward change. Mrs. Graham saw and rejoiced at the interest which he took in wee Lily, and believing that 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God often perfecteth praise,' she always employed Philip as the bearer of her little gifts to the dying girl. When alone with him, she sometimes talked of Lily's faith and resignation to the will of God, and to all her remarks he quietly assented. Once or twice he appeared

in the house of God, and the glad sight brought tears into the old lady's eyes.

But it was not until the evening when wee Lily bade adieu to earth, that Mrs. Graham really knew that Philip was a believer in Jesus. He had seated himself on the rocks, and was giving the final touches to a little sketch of Brodick Bay at sunset. Mrs. Graham stole up to him unobserved, and laying her hand on his shoulder, she was answered by a smile, while he held up his picture in triumph. After giving it a due share of admiration, the old lady sat down beside him, and in a few minutes she said quietly, 'Annie and I have been with wee Lily, and the dear child is so low to-night that I feel sure she is very near her home. John has also seen her, and confirms my opinion ; so I came to tell you, knowing that you would like to visit her again.'

Philip was deeply moved, and turning towards his aunt he said earnestly, 'Yes ; I shall cer-

tainly go. That little child has been God's ministering angel to my soul. I daresay you knew that I came here a scoffer, and now I can humbly say that I believe in the Lord Jesus, and on Him alone my hopes of salvation are resting.'

'God be praised, dear Philip, for the work is His,' was the old lady's answer. Tears of joy rolled down her cheeks while they walked silently homewards; and as Philip left her she said with a smile, 'I am thinking that the angels up yonder are rejoicing over a saved soul, and that your dead mother's prayers are all answered.'

It was late in the autumn, but the season was unusually balmy, and when Philip reached Lily's cottage the door stood partly open.

Entering noiselessly, he approached the little sufferer's bed, and there he marked a striking change. Already the cold dews of death rested on her brow, and the eyes which were wont to

brighten as he entered looked dull and sightless. Bending over her, he whispered, 'Lily, is it light in the valley now?'

A sweet smile passed over her face, and she pressed the hand he held. Then, speaking slowly and with great difficulty, she murmured, 'Farewell; we'll meet in our Father's house.'

A few loving words were then whispered to the dear ones who had nursed her in her years of suffering, one spasm seemed to flit across the little face, the heaving breast grew still, and a heavenly peace stole over the marble features. Every trace of pain was gone, and the watchers knew that angels had carried wee Lily to her Saviour's bosom.

Yes! earth was changed for heaven; and as Philip gazed on the calm beauty of the little sleeper, it seemed as if the Better Land were near, and he realized how bright and soul-sustaining was the dying Christian's faith. Gone now were all infidel sophisms. He knew that

religion was *real*, and the simple doctrine of the Cross, spoken by a little child, had led him to his God. A sinner, saved by 'Jesus only,' was his humble, and yet joyful confession. In the clear light of the Gospel, he now saw the contrast between truth and error, and remembering one very dear to him, who, as far as he knew, was still in the darkness of Romanism, he heaved a bitter sigh.

A few days afterwards wee Lily's remains were laid in a sunny corner of the old churchyard, and, at Philip's request, he was allowed to place a simple tombstone over her grave. The little girl's name and age, with this text, was inscribed, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

Lily's 'going home,' and Philip's conversion, about which he could now quietly talk to one and another of his cousins, proved a new bond between them. All reserve had passed away, and he valued their friendship as fellow-pilgrims

on the heavenward road. Great humility and earnestness marked the dawn of Philip's faith, and although far from being 'ashamed of Jesus,' yet he was ever afraid of professing more religion than he felt.

When the first October leaves were falling the Graham party left Arran, but it was not until November's blasts had made the forest bare that Philip returned to Devonshire. Walter Graham and he were touring through the wilds of Ross-shire and Inverness, and despite unsettled weather they enjoyed visiting their blue lochs and pine-woods.

Happy, and momentous too, was Philip's sojourn with his friends, and they did not separate until he made them all promise that they would spend Christmas at Fairley Hall; a promise which the old lady and her family faithfully kept. And very cheerful was the gathering in the old mansion-house on Christmas-eve. It had been greatly improved since

summer, and the winter-garden was like a little picture of fairy-land. Mrs. Williams was in her element, and as she conducted Mrs. Graham to her room, she said, with a low curtsy, 'Ah, ma'am, this is like the old days back again.'

There was a change in the rectory: the clergyman had died, and the Reverend Mr. Lovewood, Emily Walton's husband, was appointed in his place. Of course the society of his cousins was a pleasant acquisition to Philip, and better still, Mr. Lovewood was a faithful servant of his Divine Master. In him Philip found a wise counsellor, and one who was always anxious to aid and promote any scheme of usefulness which he might suggest. All the poor and aged people at Fairley were remembered on Christmas morning, and in the afternoon the children assembled in the school-room, where a liberal entertainment was prepared for them. Afterwards they received appropriate gifts from a Christmas-tree, about

the arrangements of which Mrs. Lovewood, Philip, and one or two others, had been busily engaged. By and bye all the party adjourned to the lawn in front of the mansion-house, and there the children romped to their hearts' content. When Philip appeared among them, with Mrs. Graham leaning on his arm, he was heartily cheered ; and those who watched his handsome countenance might observe a peaceful expression there, to which it had long been a stranger. Everything had a new interest now, for the true light was shining on his soul, and, realizing that he was 'not his own, but bought with a price,' he earnestly desired to 'spend and be spent' in the blessed Saviour's cause.

Christmas-day passed very pleasantly ; but as in life's history sad thoughts often intrude themselves at a joyous season, we believe that Philip was sometimes thinking of a sunny afternoon in Naples, only 'one short year ago.' Marie de Tours was then the happiest of the

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Christmas party, and now he shuddered as he pictured her a nun in a dismal convent. Sad memories, however, are best unspoken, and the listener grows weary over stories of the past.

A life of active service, seeking to help others, and to do good to all around him, was Philip's aim ; and if grateful hearts and the widow's blessing be deemed rewards, then was he amply recompensed. We need scarcely be told that the Grahams entered warmly into all his plans, while the old lady's kind words made her a welcome visitor in the cottage homes.

The short winter-days speeded happily on, and not until Annie Graham gathered the first bunch of snowdrops did the party at Fairley realize that spring had come again. Philip was in no hurry to part with his 'newly-found kins-folk,' for that was the title which he jestingly applied to the Grahams ; and when the ominous appearance of packing-boxes betokened their de-

parture, he insisted on detaining his elder cousin John. The latter had no business cares to plead, and as the genial air of Devonshire was well adapted for delicate lungs, the point was settled.





CHAPTER XI.

PHILIP REVISITS WIESBADEN AND FINDS
AN OLD FRIEND.

WHEN Philip Walton's horizon was growing brighter, an old friend whom we have not mentioned lately seemed to be falling into deeper troubles. Few and far between were Sidney Harvey's letters, and at length their contents became so unsatisfactory and mysterious that Philip dreaded to receive them. Pecuniary difficulties evidently depressed him, and from time to time he gave hints of a darker misery. Once or twice Philip sent him money, and while thanking him warmly for his generosity, he begged him to discontinue

his gifts, adding, 'No money can stem the tide of my misfortunes.'

Notwithstanding the cold calculating age in which we live, there is often a lasting bond in school friendships, especially where the affection has been mutual. Philip was warmly attached to Harvey, and longed to comfort him, but in what way he knew not. Often did he wish that the Lord would open his poor friend's eyes, and that He would graciously lead him to the only source of true comfort. After carefully considering the matter, Philip determined to visit Harvey, and thereby to learn the real state of his affairs; and in little more than a year after his return from Naples he found himself quietly pacing the handsome bridge at Basle. On going to Harvey's house he learned that the family were from home, and that they were then residing at Wiesbaden. Very few of Philip's old friends now lived at Basle, and any information which he gleaned about the Har-

veys was vague and unsatisfactory. To proceed to Wiesbaden then was the only alternative, and on the way thither he spent a few days at Heidelberg. Whilst there he naturally revisited his favourite walks, wandering round the castle, and admiring the scenery as of old, but with this difference, that in it all he now traced his heavenly Father's handiwork.

By and bye he hastened onwards, and on a sultry July evening, after hours of railway travelling, a good dinner and a siesta, he was walking in the Kursaal Gardens at Wiesbaden. The moon shed its pale light over a fairy-like scene, the air was scented with the fragrance of the lime-trees and orange-blossom, and all around one heard the busy hum of voices. Gay and varied were the costumes of the groups which flitted past. Some sauntered in the gardens, while others were hurrying to the gaming-tables, and a few were lounging in the refreshment-room, or smoking and drinking their *café*.

noir below the trees outside. A sudden impulse induced Philip to go into the gambling-room, and for a time he stood silently watching the eager faces of the players. Old men and women, with young girls and youths, all mingled in the throng, but there was no joyous expression in the youthful faces; on the contrary, every countenance wore a haggard, anxious look. One lady in particular attracted Philip's notice. She was attired in white muslin, while a gay shawl of crimson crape was thrown over her shoulders, and the toilet was completed by a black hat with white feathers. Discontented and forbidding was the expression which this German-looking lady's features wore, and at times a scornful smile flitted across her face, which was no longer young. Philip observed that she played deeply, her hand trembled a little, and at last her pale face grew almost livid with excitement. Can that eager player be Meta Harvey? was a question which more than once

suggested itself to Philip, and if so, he thought she is sadly changed. Half an hour afterwards he was quietly smoking in the gardens ; many of the pleasure-seekers had retired, and wandering away from the Kursaal he stood by the side of a beautiful lake.

Presently the lady whom we have described hurried towards the spot, and after casting one or two furtive glances around her, she suddenly stopped in front of Philip.

Just then the moon shone out from behind a cloud, and as the light fell upon the lady's face, Philip felt persuaded that the wife of his old friend was standing before him. Holding out his hand, he said, ' Am I right in supposing that you are Mrs. Harvey ?'

' Yes ; I *am* that unhappy woman,' she replied in bitter tones.

A foreboding of evil, with a sad suspicion of its cause, passed through Philip's mind, but he said kindly, ' I fear that you are in trouble.'

‘Trouble!’ she exclaimed, interrupting him with a mocking laugh, that grated harshly on the ear, ‘I am ruined ; you watched me at the gaming-tables to-night, and I tell you that I staked my all, and have lost *that*, and more.’

Philip was silent, and, coming closer to him, she continued eagerly, ‘Mr. Walton, I know that you are a kind-hearted man, and, although Sidney never told me, I believe that you gave him money lately. I have not a penny in the world ; the last farthing which my husband gave me for our necessary wants is gone, and I dare not tell him that it was lost at play.’ Then, laying her hand on his arm, she whispered, ‘Oh, for the sake of old and happier times, will you help me?’

Moved by an appeal so humiliating, Philip answered gravely, ‘Mrs. Harvey, I am ready to be of any service to you ; but I grieve to find that concealment is practised between you and Harvey. Far better to tell him all, and to

strive to keep out of temptation's way in future.'

'Ah! your advice comes too late; I cannot stop playing.'

'Don't say you *cannot*. And why make yourself miserable, and break poor Harvey's heart?'

'He has complained of me to you, then?' she said inquiringly.

'No; he never breathed a word on the subject; but the sad tone of his letters made me fear that there was something wrong.' Then, speaking gently, Philip added, 'Forgive me, Mrs. Harvey, when I take the privilege of an old friend, and entreat you, for the sake of your husband and your dear little children, to make one brave effort, and to resist this evil practice. And I believe, indeed you do not require me to tell you, that Harvey's warm approval and a happy home will be more than a reward.'

'You do not know,' she answered in ironical tones; 'but things are changed now, the romance

of early days is gone, and I sometimes think,' she added carelessly, 'that my husband hates me.'

'Hush!' Philip said; 'you cannot believe *that*;' then he continued very earnestly, 'you love your children, and I wish you to answer this question, Have you realized that one day they may make the sad discovery that their mother is a gambler?'

She started at this plain speaking; but the lines in her face grew less hard, while she answered evasively, 'I believe that you are a true friend, and I know that I acted wrongly in leaving Carl, my youngest boy, to-night. He is ill, and when I rose to go out his little sad face almost made me relent; but you see my husband was from home, and the hope of winning money overcame all other feelings.'

With a deep sigh over a case which seemed so hopeless, Philip asked, 'When does Harvey return?'

‘I believe he is at home now ; he went to Schwalbach, which you know is only some miles from here, this morning, and he intended to return in the evening.’

‘It is late,’ remarked Philip, looking at his watch, ‘and if you will allow me to accompany you home, I shall see your husband.’

‘Very well,’ was Mrs. Harvey’s reply, and she looked pleased, then turning towards him she added, somewhat abruptly, ‘Remember, not a word about where you saw me to-night.’

‘You have nothing to fear,’ he said gravely ; ‘I have no wish to make mischief, or to vex my old friend.’

While they were walking homewards, Philip slipped some money into his companion’s hands, saying, as he did so, ‘Take this, Mrs. Harvey, remembering that it is for yourself and your children ; and I earnestly pray that you may be kept from entering those hateful gambling-rooms again.’

‘Thank you ; you are very kind,’ she murmured quietly, and the rest of their walk was continued in silence.

On reaching the pretty little house which the Harveys occupied, Philip saw his old friend standing in the door-way, and even in the imperfect light he was startled by the change in his appearance. Without recognising Philip, who was standing in the background, he darted an angry scowl towards his wife, exclaiming, ‘Out again, and your child ill ; perhaps dying, for aught you care!’

No excuses were offered, and with a defiant glance Mrs. Harvey was passing into the house, when, turning suddenly ‘round, she said, ‘Do you not see that Mr. Walton is with me?’

‘Walton! my old friend!’ he said, grasping his hand; ‘come along, and welcome.’ Then, murmuring a half-apology for his former ebullition of temper, he pleaded that he was not well, and that he felt miserably anxious about his boy.

By and bye they sat down to supper; and although Harvey tried to make things pass pleasantly, there were constant jarrings, and it was only too evident that between the unfortunate couple there was a total want of trust.

As soon as his wife retired, Harvey said, 'Come, Walton, let us have our pipes, and you will entertain me as of old.'

The early morning hours found the friends still talking. Harvey joked and laughed, but his mirth sounded hollow, and it seemed as if he dreaded to speak of the misery that was written in every line of his care-worn face. Politics, the improvements at Fairley Hall, and the literature of the day, were all discussed. Old friends were mutually inquired about, and at length, after a pause, Philip said frankly, 'I ought to tell you that I have renounced the infidel sentiments in which I once boasted, and now I joyfully confess my belief in the doctrines of Christianity.' Here he was interrupted by a

cold sneer, but taking no notice, he continued more earnestly, 'Believe me, Harvey, I never knew true happiness or rest until now, and I would gladly give all that I possess to see you, and all in whom I am interested, partakers of the same blessed faith.'

Moved by his fervour, Harvey answered: 'Come, you are the best fellow I know, but don't expect me to adopt puerile notions at this time of day; no, no, I will stand to *my* colours, be what they may. You certainly are an exception, but hitherto we deemed religion to be only fit for ascetics and old women.'

'God grant that you may think differently some day,' was Philip's answer; and rising to take leave, he added, 'Another time I shall tell you how my darkness was changed into light, and remember that in whatever way we differ, you may always count me your friend.'

Poor Harvey wrung his hand without speaking, and as the door closed behind Philip, he

did not hear the bitter groans that told their tale of agony. Alas! his wife's gambling was notorious! Her private fortune was gone, and again and again had she obtained money on false pretences from her husband to satisfy her miserable craving. At one time she used to win large sums, but 'fate,' as she termed it, was now against her, and she invariably lost. Still she played on, and so low had she sunk in vice, that she sold the greater part of her jewels, in order to supply herself with funds.

Wiesbaden was certainly an unsuitable place for one who had Mrs. Harvey's propensities, but its waters were recommended for the little invalid, and Harvey hoped that his wife's love for her boy might overcome the evil for a time. During the first few weeks she nursed the child most tenderly; but alas! temptation came, and, too weak to resist its power, she again found her way to the gambling-rooms.

After the visit which we have described, poor

little Carl Harvey grew rapidly worse, and his mother never left him. Once or twice, when Philip found her watching by the sufferer's bedside, and knowing from her tearful gaze that her heart was softened, he tried to lead her thoughts to Christ the heavenly Comforter ; but it seemed as if her heart were shut against the entrance of the truth, for, spurning his words almost rudely, she said, 'I have no belief in religion ; and don't speak to me of a world beyond the grave. Nay, nay, I am weary of existence, and annihilation is all I ask, or hope for.'

A most miserable confession ! and Philip felt that to talk to her was useless ; but the gate of prayer is always open, and into his Father's listening ear he poured her sad story, and pleaded the poor unhappy woman's cause.

Harvey's two elder children, who were bright intelligent little things, became extremely fond of Philip, and observing that they enjoyed

listening to a story, and that one of them was learning to read, he gave to each of them a New Testament. Harvey made no objection to the gifts, but when Philip ventured to talk to himself about religion, his manner became constrained, and he invariably changed the subject. Most unsatisfactory, then, was the renewal of this old school-friendship. Harvey had grown more sarcastic and morose, and at times there was an unnatural excitement in his manner, while Philip observed that he drank wine too freely. His companions were men of low tastes, and their society was so uncongenial to Philip, that at length he resolved to bid adieu to Wiesbaden.

The two friends parted sadly, but with mutual good feeling, and at Philip's request Harvey faithfully promised that on his return to Basle he would place his little boys at a Protestant boarding-school. Their baby brother was dying, and while Philip bent over the suffering

child, he could not help realizing the goodness of God in taking him early unto Himself.

A thick mist was hanging over Wiesbaden, concealing the tops of its houses, as Philip drove away to Biebrich ; but as he neared his destination, the sun's rays shone out, the mist disappeared, and, rejoicing in the surrounding brightness, he was reminded of the clear light of the gospel dispelling from man's mind the darkness of infidelity and error. The quiet of that evening was spent in humble thanksgiving for his own enlightenment, and in earnest breathings unto Heaven for the welfare of others. The fate of the poor Harveys lay heavily on his heart, and as he reflected on the sad results of infidelity, God revealed to him more forcibly than before the dark 'pit from which he himself had been dug.'



CHAPTER XII.

A STORY OF CONVENT LIFE.

TRAVELLERS seldom speak in glowing terms of Cologne, and except for the beauty of its cathedral, they do not care to linger in the city ; but in Philip's mind it was pleasantly associated with old school-days, and also with memories of his father. And shortly after leaving Wiesbaden, and resting for a few days at Biebrich and Coblenz, he enjoyed renewing acquaintance with all the well-remembered places. Impelled by a restless spirit, he went out about daybreak one morning, and after wandering for some

hours, he found himself in the old cathedral, listening to a magnificent Mass which the grand organ was then pealing forth. When the music ceased, he remained quietly admiring the architecture, and glancing round he saw only a few strangers, who seemed to be similarly occupied, and one or two peasants who were devoutly telling their beads, or gazing at the representations of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary.

Half an hour might have slipped away, while memory was busy retracing past scenes. At length Philip was roused from his reverie by overhearing parts of a conversation which was carried on in English, and which evidently had reference to the Church of Rome. The party was at a little distance, but glancing towards the gentleman who was speaking, he fancied that he might be a Protestant clergyman. A tall lady in mourning stood near him, and a little in front of her there was another lady and

a gentleman, whom, to his infinite surprise, Philip discovered to be no less personages than Mr. Rayburn and his sister. They did not observe him, and scarcely had he time to recover from his mingled feelings of wonder and pleasure, when a third lady appeared, and, turning towards the clergyman, she said, in answer to his remarks, 'I love the music of those fine old Masses, but my heart shudders at the empty forms of Romanism, knowing how its votaries are misled.' The last speaker was partly concealed by a pillar, but something in her tones awoke a chord of memory, and a wild hope flashed through Philip's mind. We live not in an age of miracles, nor is the convent wont to set her captives free! And yet full of eager expectation Philip hurried towards the group. One glance at the lady who had spoken was enough, for it revealed the well-remembered features of Marie de Tours! Great joy often lacks words to express itself, and after the sur-

prised exclamation, 'Marie!' Philip stood silently wondering. But a bright smile from Marie soon re-assured him, and holding out her hand she said, as quietly as if they had parted yesterday, 'Yes, it is I, Mr. Walton; I have left the convent,' and raising her eyes to his she added, 'I am now a Protestant.'

'Thank God for *that*,' Philip said fervently.

A deep blush crimsoned the young girl's cheeks at these words, and the earnest gaze which met his seemed to say, 'You were not wont to speak thus reverently.'

'I need not ask if you are well,' Philip added, his voice falling into the old friendly tones, 'but I am impatient to hear all that has happened. How is the Countess? and where are you living?'

'I am in Cologne now,' Marie said, with an archness of manner which sounded strangely familiar to him, 'and mamma is in Paris. I left her a few days ago for the purpose of

accompanying Monsieur and Madame René in a tour through Germany and Prussia.' Marie was longing to tell her story, and to hear Philip's in return, but with a perversity common to our nature, she talked about indifferent matters, and as Philip listened, he only knew that she was speaking to him, and that a bright waking dream was realized. At length Marie remembered her friends, and turning hastily round, she found that they had moved on to another part of the cathedral.

'Will you come and let me introduce you to Monsieur and Madame René?' she said to Philip. 'I think you will like them; and I declare I am forgetting our old friends the Rayburns—they are here too. It is all so strange: I met them yesterday, and I meet you to-day.'

In a few minutes all the party were chatting pleasantly; the Rayburns were delighted to meet Philip again, and Mr. Rayburn declared

that the whole thing was like a renewal of old times. By and bye Miss Rayburn and Madame René exchanged significant glances, and the latter said, turning to Marie, 'Madoiselle de Tours, we are going to take a walk; but as I know you feel the heat oppressive, perhaps you had better rest here for a little time.'

'Let us seat ourselves in yonder cool corner, where the sunbeams do not penetrate,' observed Philip, taking for granted that he was included in the arrangement.

Marie gracefully, and we believe not unwillingly, accepted both suggestions. Presently the hum of voices ceased, and looking from the place where she sat towards the spacious doorway, Marie saw only an aged peasant kneeling before a crucifix, and apparently engaged in earnest prayer.

Philip and she sat silently for a few minutes. Neither had any feelings of constraint, and

only a delicious sensation of rest stole over them. When Philip first saw Marie, he could not divest himself of an undefined fear that there might be priests in her train, and he had visions of her being again incarcerated. But the bright fearless glance which accompanied the words, 'I am now a Protestant,' set his mind at rest. At length he turned towards her, saying, with the old trustful smile which she remembered, 'Marie, this is all so like a dream, and yet I know it is real. It seems enough to have you sitting here ; but I am longing to have the mystery solved.'

'I shall tell you everything,' she replied, 'and I don't feel that I am in a dream, for after leaving the convent I believed that we should meet again.'

'*Faith* is good, but what do you say, fair lady, to one who never went beyond *hoping* ?'

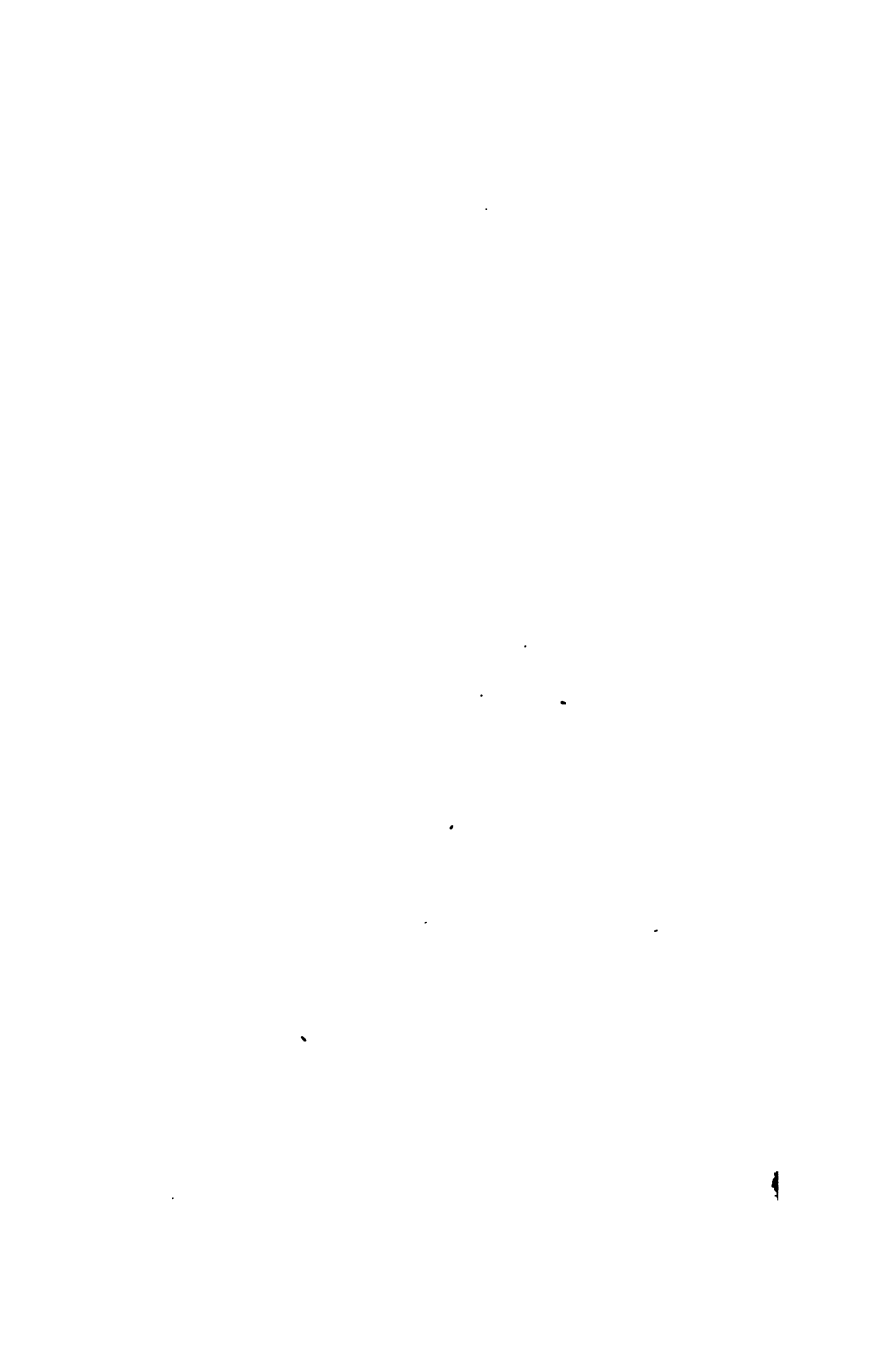
A happy smile and a little shake of her head were Marie's answers. She then said quietly,

‘The convent story is grave in some parts, but my sojourn there was God’s way of opening my eyes to the errors of Romanism.’

‘Then, dear Marie, we must praise our heavenly Father for bringing much good out of evil. I too have changed since we parted, and the sceptic you once knew now understands and loves the simple religion of Jesus.’

There was a pause ; and Marie said warmly, while the tears stood in her eyes, ‘Oh, I am so glad ! I want to tell you,’ she continued, ‘how Jesus shed His full clear light on my soul, and showed me that He alone could wash away my sins.—Did you ever hear of me after I entered the convent ?’ she asked.

‘No, I only knew that you had become a black-robed nun, who was not allowed to write to her own mother ; and I feared that convent discipline must either change you into a cold inanimate being resembling yonder statue facing us, or perhaps (and the last idea seemed





'My reception at the convent was intended to be kind, but the reverend mother disappointed me greatly.'—PHILIP WALTON, page 185.

the truest) that you were unhappy, and that you often pined for your home and your friends.'

'The nun's story must speak for itself, then,' she said, with a smile, 'and when you grow weary of the recital, pray stop me.'

'Très-bien, mademoiselle ; commencez.'

'My reception at the convent was intended to be kind, but the reverend Mother, "la bonne Mère Angélique," as they called her, disappointed me greatly. I expected to be associated with one who was tender and womanly in her feelings, but instead of sympathy I found only coldness and austerity, a person using set religious phrases, and turning any betrayal of sentiment into ridicule. It was believed in the convent that the reverend Mother had known many kinds of sorrow in her early days. A gentleman residing in Normandy, whose property adjoined her father's, was said to have engaged her affections, and afterwards he de-

served her on some false pretext, choosing a fairer bride. The cruel blight turned the poor woman's heart to stone, and her life in the Italian convent had not proved a solace. She found that jarrings, petty jealousies, ay, and bitter heart-burnings, were only too common among the Sisterhood. Alas! it needs something else than a convent's iron gratings and its massive walls to exclude the world from the human heart, and nothing but the indwelling grace of God can give true rest and peace.—But I did not intend to preach. Suffice it to say, that from the first my own experiences in convent life disappointed all former dreams. Many of the nuns shocked me by their frivolity and want of refinement, while others who were famed for their sanctity looked weary and miserable. Self-denial was their motto, and yet it pained me to notice that the daily practice of that virtue gave them no true peace. You know I am naturally social, but except at

stated times nuns are not allowed to converse. In the evening we made clothes for the poor, and while thus occupied, a book describing the virtues of some patron saint was read aloud. Before vespers a few minutes of recreation were permitted, and then might be heard a very Babel of tongues. Subjects of the most trivial nature were discussed. At one time the eccentricities of a fat priest, who acted as one of our confessors, were held up for derision, or again the conduct of some Sister who had made herself unpopular was criticised, and often severely censured, by the not too amiable group. Is this the result of withdrawal from the world? was frequently my mental question at these times, and I groaned over the fatal delusion which led me to expect that I should breathe the very air of heaven within a convent. But I did not despair of attaining holiness by good works; and vigils and self-imposed penances were performed by me with untiring diligence.

‘At length one of the priests, a grave, intellectual-looking man, whose sad face betokened a sadder history, observed my pale looks, and warning me not to injure my health, he suggested to the reverend Mother that I should be allowed a little more garden exercise. But she haughtily refused to grant me her permission, and it seemed as if she considered that human pity was sinful, for she ordered that I should change my confessor. And instead of having the spiritual advice of a kind friend, who seemed intuitively to understand my longings after holiness, and who sympathized with me in the frequent failure of my efforts, she placed me under the care of the other priest, to whom I previously alluded, and whose coarseness and levity of manner always disgusted me. About this time I discovered the Lady-Superior’s love of exercising her power, and I also gathered from a few circumstances, which are too trivial to relate, that with her I was no favourite.

There was another Sister in the convent to whom the reverend Mother evinced no goodwill. She was a young English girl, called Sister Winifred, and whose real name I afterwards discovered to be Annie Clair. Her beauty and gentleness completely won my heart; but she was very delicate, and a hectic flush on her cheeks, as well as a distressing cough, plainly told that her days on earth were numbered. Sister Winifred and I did not meet until after I had been several weeks in the convent, and the calm, sweet expression of her countenance is indelibly written on my memory. I was desired to make a garland of flowers to decorate the Virgin's shrine, and while busy gathering roses and myrtle blossoms, Winifred came into the garden leaning on the arm of one of the older nuns. A love of flowers was our common attraction. I told her what I was doing, and she remained until I had finished the garland. We went into the chapel together,

and as I placed the exquisite flowers at the feet of the Virgin, Winifred pointed to a painting of the Saviour on the cross, saying in an earnest whisper, "I would rather have the garland *there* ; Jesus demands our first homage." I was particularly struck by her words, and from that day we were friends. So close, indeed, became our friendship, that the Lady-Superior upbraided me sharply, saying that intimacies were prohibited among the Sisterhood, and she added, in her coldest tones, "You ought to know, Sister Marie, that earthly affection is unbecoming in one who is the destined Bride of Christ."

'Coming events, however, decreed that Sister Winifred and I should be more together than the reverend Mother once intended. It was whispered in the convent that the English nun's religion was tainted by heresy, and frequent penance was enforced upon her. One morning we were told that she suffered from an attack of pleurisy, and none wondered, knowing that

on the previous day she had been ordered to walk round the cloisters with naked feet, and afterwards to pass an hour prostrate before the Virgin in meditation upon her merits. The nun who generally attended to Sister Winifred during any attack of illness grew weary of the repeated task, and she suggested to the reverend Mother that I ought to take her place. This proposal was at first rejected, but on discovering my capabilities of nursing, the Lady-Superior somewhat ungraciously consented. Not, however, without giving me strict injunctions to maintain perfect silence in the sick-room, and telling me that the slightest infringement of this rule would be punished by severe discipline. I look back even now with a sad pleasure to the sick-room of that sweet girl. And not all the saintly legends with which they crammed us in the convent could exemplify a more Christ-like character than Sister Winifred, as she lay ripening for heaven. Like

a feeble taper her light was waning, but, thank God ! it did not go out before first casting a ray of heaven's light across my dark and troubled path.

'The two priests and the reverend Mother paid occasional visits to the invalid, but as her sufferings increased, the latter resigned her almost entirely to my care. Her great weakness made conversation impossible, so that I was not tempted to disobedience. But a bright smile always rewarded my efforts to relieve her, and she sometimes pointed upwards, while I caught the whispered words, "I shall soon be at home with Jesus." One day when feeling a little stronger, she took my hands saying, "Marie, I have been praying that Jesus may teach you the *right* way ; we are in error here." "Do tell me," I asked (forgetting in my earnestness the reverend Mother's command), "what gives you such peace, far more than penance, or a hundred prayers to our blessed Lady ever

brought to me?" For a moment the face of the dying nun was lighted up with an unearthly radiance, and in a clear voice she answered, "Jesus only."

"I used to think," said I, "that I loved my Saviour, but since coming here my heart is full of rebellious thoughts, and at times the way to heaven seems very dark." Here Sister Winifred drew a small pocket-Bible from her bosom, and kissing me, she said, "Dear Marie, you are my kindest friend, and I leave this Protestant Bible to you, because it is a priceless gift. Read it in secret, and never part with it, remembering that its perusal led me to look away from self and from self-righteous works, and to rest my soul on Jesus." I slipped the treasured volume into my pocket, but it was not until after the dying Sister had exchanged her convent cell with its carpetless floor for the glories of the New Jerusalem, that I found an opportunity of opening it. Her death was a real sorrow to

me. Far removed from all whom I loved, I often craved for one kind word, and now the only voice which gave it to me was for ever hushed. After a long day of fasting I retired to my dormitory, feeling weary and dispirited, and before trying to sleep on a hard pallet, I took Sister Winifred's Bible from its hiding-place. On the title-page was written "To Annie Clair, from her affectionate father," and then followed the date and the name of a parsonage in Herefordshire. Dear Annie's father was evidently a Protestant clergyman, and hers was apparently the not uncommon case of a daughter who had been perverted to the Romish faith, and, probably to the grief of her friends, she had taken the veil. Nuns are supposed to bury their past life in oblivion, and the gentle Sister never told me her story. I only gathered from occasional hints that she once knew a happy home, and when we were conversing about heaven her face used to

brighten as she said, "Ah! what happiness our Saviour is preparing for us there; a glorious meeting-place with those we love, and no bitter partings afterwards!"

'For a few minutes I could not help weeping, and as I tried to imagine poor Annie's history, thoughts of my dear lost home crowded into memory. At length I began to turn over the leaves of the Bible, as if at random, and in doing so my eyes lighted on these words of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, let us never say that anything happens by chance, for I believe that in each event God has a loving purpose, and that evening He sent the message which my soul needed. It roused me from despair, and raising my eyes to heaven I simply prayed, "Holy Saviour, I desire to come to Thee; all around is dark, but do Thou give me light."


'When I had finished, a heavenly calm stole

over me, and refreshing sleep revived my weary frame. After that night I always carried the precious volume concealed in my dress, and every spare moment was spent in its perusal. In the clear light of the Gospel, my religion seemed a groping in the dark. I shuddered at what now appeared to be only Popish superstition, and yet the lessons of childhood held a certain sway, for I often asked myself the question, "Can the simple teaching of Jesus be indeed the true way to heaven?" Hopes, fears, and unbelief struggled in my breast, and I found no lasting comfort.

'At length, one morning, between sleeping and waking, thoughts of sin weighed heavily upon me, and my pillow was wet with tears, when suddenly a pale soft light seemed to steal into the room, and rising before me I saw a glorious picture of our Saviour on the Cross. His countenance beamed upon me with ineffable love, and I heard a voice, in silvery accents, say-

ing, "I was wounded for *your* transgressions, I was bruised for *your* iniquities, the chastisement of *your* peace was upon me, and with my stripes *you* are healed." When the voice ceased I felt as if my cheeks were fanned by a breath of summer air, and I awoke saying, "The penalty of sin is paid ; I have nothing to do, for Christ has done it all." Looking around me, I saw only the dreary room, with its iron bed and a single chair. Rain pattered dismally on the window, but my heart was filled with gladness, and I knew that Jesus had borne my sins away.

'All that day my mind was kept in perfect peace, being stayed upon its God, and before going to the daily routine of duty I read the beautiful passage in Isaiah which had comforted me in my dream. Irksome now, and devoid of meaning, conventual life appeared, as well as many of the services in the Romish Church. Confession was especially distasteful to me, and I considered absolution pronounced by a priest



to be a solemn mockery. I was fulfilling the year of my noviciate, but I felt that to take the veil was impossible, while to escape from it seemed utterly hopeless.


‘By and bye my saving knowledge, or heresy, as Bible doctrine was termed in the convent, became known, and I dare not tell you of the penance, ay, the cruel torture, which was inflicted to induce me to recant. Sometimes, during an attack of faintness, I believed that death was going to set me free, but Christ’s presence was with me in the darkest hour, and I realized His gracious promise, “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.”





CHAPTER XIII.

HOW AN OLD WOMAN CIRCUMVENTS THE CHURCH OF ROME.

‘  NE evening a French nun drew me aside, and pointing towards a room where the Lady-Superior and a priest were sitting, she said, “Sister Marie, I overheard them plotting to send you away from this place, and I think you are going to a convent where the rules are even more strict than ours.”

‘My informant was an amiable girl, whose veracity I could trust, and there were tears in her eyes as she implored me to give up my new opinions. I thanked her warmly, but said that they were “dearer to me than life.” Her face

grew very pale as she whispered, "Oh, beware; you know not what you are doing; for I tell you that life itself has been sacrificed for the welfare of our holy Church." I did not sleep that night, and its hours were spent in earnest prayer.

'Next morning there was an unwonted stir in the convent, for we were anticipating the important ceremony of one of our Sisterhood taking the veil. A number of strangers and priests were expected to be in chapel, and afterwards the priests were to visit the convent. During the forenoon the reverend Mother called me into her room, and, turning to me, she said, "I presume, Sister Marie, that you have seen a novice taking her final vows?" I replied that I had witnessed the ceremony on one or two occasions. "You cannot have that privilege to-day," she remarked in stern tones, "for a heretic would be out of place at so holy a scene." Then, abruptly changing the subject,

she said, "By the way, you know how to bake, for I remember seeing you make a cake for Sister Winifred ; and I desire you to prepare as quickly as possible a few tea-cakes, and have them ready for me on my return from chapel. Several priests," she added, "will partake of refreshments in my room."

'Silently bowing, in token of obedience, I left the room, feeling relieved, and not a little amused, at the novel task to which I had been deputed. It reminded me of happy home days, when, in a playful mood, I used to don the housekeeper's apron, and assist in making, or sometimes in spoiling, her cakes and pastry. Sister Adèle, the French nun, who spoke to me the previous evening, was ailing that day, so the reverend Mother desired her to remain with me, while the rest of the household went to chapel. As the cake-making was nearly completed, my companion grew faint, and complained of the heat of the room, so, after giving

her a little milk and water, I persuaded her to retire to her dormitory, which was in a remote part of the convent. She had been absent for some time, and I was carrying the cakes to the Lady-Superior's room, when a knock at the outer door startled me greatly. A few minutes elapsed before my trembling fingers removed the bolt and bar, and turned the heavy key. Then, peeping shyly through the half-open door, I discovered that a white-haired priest, wearing blue spectacles, was standing outside. "You are not at chapel; are you alone, my daughter?" he said inquiringly. "Yes," I replied; "at least, there is only another Sister at home, and she is ill."

'On hearing my answer, the priest entered, and closing the door very gently, he led me into the nearest room, and bade me be seated. He then took off his hat and spectacles, and, finally, on removing his white hair, which proved to be a wig, I nearly fainted with joy to see that

it was not a priest, but my dear old nurse, who stood before me! "You dear old woman; how is this?" I exclaimed. But, placing her fingers on my lips, she said, "Hush, my child; let us speak in whispers. I hoped to find you alone to-day, for I have been watching the train of nuns going into chapel, and I did not recognise your sweet face among them. I see that you are not happy," she added quickly. I sighed, and shook my head, then, taking her hands, I asked eagerly after my mother. "Ah, poor lady, her heart is broken," she replied; "and no wonder, seeing that she has only received one letter from you!" "Only one letter!" I murmured, "and I have written dozens; but the letters here are always read, and I suspect they are sometimes burned."

'Here the good woman's eyes flashed fire, and coming nearer to me, she whispered, "Listen to me, darling, for I have planned your escape."

'My escape!' thought I, 'can such happiness

be possible? and for an instant I felt that to run away was an ignominious thing; but suddenly remembering that I was no longer a Roman Catholic, I realized that God might in this way be sending a gracious answer to my prayers; and after a pause I said anxiously, "Tell me, nurse, how I am to proceed."

"You see," she replied, "that I am disguised as a French priest," and, drawing a bundle from under her cloak, she added, "here is a similar costume for you, and dressed in it you may pass unsuspected out of the lodge-gate along with me."

'In other circumstances I would have laughed at the good woman's ingenuity, but too precarious for mirth was my present situation; and in an incalculably short space of time the wan-looking nun was transformed into a diminutive priest, whose meagre face betokened days and nights of fasting. Very quietly we closed the door, lest we might disturb Sister

Adèle's slumbers, and with a palpitating heart I passed the chapel, where the Hallelujah Chorus, bursting from the deep organ and the united voices of priests, nuns, and choristers, told me that the ceremony was over, and warned us to hasten onwards. On reaching the lodge we found that the porter and his wife were at chapel, and their little daughter was watching the gate.

“You are early, Father?” she said, looking at nurse.

“Yes, my child,” was the reply, and slipping a coin into her hand, she added, “My brother priest and I are to say early mass to-morrow at a distant place, so we could not remain in chapel until the end.”

‘Heaven forgive poor nurse’s untruth, but we know there are Romanists who avow that such sins are only venial, and although nurse abhorred their faith, yet I believe that for a time her principles were corrupted by their teaching.

Naturally a clever woman, and prompted by a warm love for me, she had studied her difficult part well. A few days' residence in the neighbourhood made her acquainted with the public ceremony in prospect, so she chose that time to gain an entrance into the convent, and, as we have seen, her plan prospered admirably.

'To return, however, to the fugitive priests.

'Once outside the prison-gates I breathed a freer air, but recent suffering made me weak, and I longed for wings to speed me onwards.'

"Lean more heavily on me, my poor lamb," whispered nurse, "and try to bear up a little longer, for at the turn of the road we shall find a carriage waiting."

"Is my mother there?" I gasped.

"No, dear; she dare not run the risk of being recognised here, but I trust you may soon meet her."

'We did not speak again, and I knew not what directions nurse gave to the coachman; I

was only conscious of sinking back in the carriage, and I believe I fainted away. By and bye I awoke to find the kind old woman bending over me. She had administered a restorative, and was holding smelling-salts to my nose. "I am better now," I said cheerily.

"Oh, you are all right again, darling, but I see you are a poor starved thing," she added, kissing me, "and it is a mercy you did not faint until we were seated here."

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"We shall take the railway to Genoa, and while resting there I shall procure a lady's dress for you, but it is better for old nurse to continue as a French priest. Afterwards we shall proceed to Lyons, and once out of Italy I shall write to the Countess, who is at Versailles with your uncle."

'No incident marked our journey to Lyons, and nurse's letter was joyful news to my poor mother. She told her secret to my father's

brother, in whose house she was residing, and with whom I was a special favourite. Uncle is a Romanist, but despite his religion he grudged the priests' possession of my fortune, and I believe he swore when apprised of the fact that his niece had entered a convent. To my surprise he accompanied my mother to Lyons, and these were his words of greeting,—“ Marie, you shall never again enter a convent, but I have just heard that a great search is being made for you now, so I shall write at once to the Superior stating that you are under my care. The priests,” he added, “are troublesome fellows to meddle with, and I advise you to give a solemn promise that you will reveal nothing which you have seen in the convent. Did you sign any paper about your money?” he asked quickly.

‘I replied that I had bequeathed my entire fortune to the convent, giving my signature, but I understood that the date was not to be affixed nor was the document to be sealed until the day

on which I took my final vow. After a grave discussion, we decided that I was in honour bound to implement my agreement. Uncle was difficult to convince, and I believe he yielded from a dread that if the runaway nun's fortune were not secured to the convent, there was a danger of her being recaptured.

‘And now, Mr. Walton,’ said Marie, ‘my story is ended, and I need not tax your patience further by descanting on the indignant ire of the priests, nor is it necessary to detail the varied symptoms of a low fever, which excitement caused. Money appeased my spiritual advisers in a measure, but they were sadly mortified by my heresy and desertion, and Father Antonio, whom you will remember, wrote a touching appeal to my feelings. I was too ill to read his letter, and uncle sent a peremptory reply, which completely silenced him. I do not wish to say a bitter word against the Church of Rome, believing that God has

earnest worshippers within her pale, but my heart overflows with gratitude unto Him for leading me from her dark superstition unto Jesus, the true and only light.'

The noon-day sunbeams were now stealing across the shady part of the cathedral, and as Philip watched Marie's animated countenance he saw that suffering had left its traces there, but past sorrow lent new sweetness to her expression, and she never looked more beautiful in his eyes. 'Your tale is very interesting,' he said warmly, 'God only knows all that you have endured;' but with a happy smile he added, 'Dark days are ended now. Brave old nurse deserves a hearty vote of thanks; I long to congratulate her on her clever conduct, and feel jealous that I did not share the triumph of setting the little captive free.'

Both indulged in a merry laugh over the incidents of escape, and had not their sanctum been invaded by a party of tourists, we cannot

tell how long they might have lingered talking. 'How late it is!' exclaimed Marie, 'the Rénés will be in despair at my long absence.'

'*N'importe*,' Philip answered, adding, with a mischievous glance, which heightened the colour on Marie's cheeks, 'surely an old friend has a little right to monopolize you?'

A saucy rejoinder from Marie followed, and by and bye they were walking leisurely to the hotel where Monsieur René and his wife were living. On the way thither Philip learned that although the Countess was a Protestant at heart, she still adhered to the outward forms of Romanism, and that she and her daughter resided in Paris with Monsieur de Tours, Marie's uncle, who was a wealthy man and unmarried. The latter feigned displeasure at the change in his niece's religion, but it merely manifested itself in words, for which his many kind deeds atoned. Monsieur and Madame René were kind, excellent people, and the

former was constantly engaged in evangelistic work. Marie had only known them for a short time, but kindred sympathy drew them together, and as the lady was lively and intelligent she won golden opinions from Monsieur de Tours.





CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE SUN COMES OUT, AND THERE IS
'LIGHT AT LAST.'

A FEW days had elapsed since the interesting rencontre in the cathedral, and the Rénés, Mr. and Miss Rayburn, with Philip and Marie, were enjoying pleasant excursions on the Rhine.

Monsieur René promised to officiate one Sunday at a Protestant place of worship in Coblantz, and before leaving Cologne he and his wife were taking an evening stroll. At his usual hour Philip walked into their sitting-room, and we fancy that he was not greatly disap-

pointed to see that Marie was there alone. She was busy arranging some flowers, and Philip said playfully, 'Ah! Mademoiselle, whose shrine do you mean to decorate?'

She smiled as she answered, 'Mr. Rayburn has just given me these roses, and I am making bouquets to take with us to-morrow.'

Philip was conscious of a twinge of jealousy at the mention of his friend's name, a feeling which was utterly groundless, for it was evident that Mr. Rayburn regarded Marie in the same light as he did any other pleasant and well-educated woman of his acquaintance. Lovers often make sad mistakes, but fortunately Philip's irritation was short-lived, and as he and Marie watched the sunset soon afterwards, we believe that all unpleasant thoughts had passed away. 'Does that glorious sky remind you of Naples?' Philip asked.

'Not exactly; and yet I was thinking of evenings there.' After a pause, Marie said

very quietly, 'Will you tell me something about your father? I have often wished to hear of his last days.'

There were tears in her eyes when Philip finished his brief recital, and she said in a low voice, 'He was always kind and unselfish.'

'You were a great favourite of his, Marie, and few mourned more truly than he did when you left your friends for convent life.'

A dreamy, pained expression stole over her face as she answered, 'The struggle was awful, but thank God that after a long long night, daylight and deliverance has come.'

'Perhaps, Marie, you did not know *then* how much I loved you, and although I deemed your resolve to be a miserable delusion, yet believing your motives to be pure and holy, I felt that a wretched infidel like myself was unworthy to aspire to your hand. Our faith and hopes are one *now*.—Marie, will you leave fair France to brighten my home in England?'

Marie's face was bent downwards, and she remained silent.

Philip waited, then speaking somewhat vehemently he added, 'Forgive me, I have been hasty, and so long a time has passed that doubtless all is changed.'

A moment afterwards, and one loving glance, accompanied by the word, 'Philip!' gently but reproachfully spoken, quieted his fears, and banished doubt for ever from his mind.

'Then the little woman really believes that I can make her happy?' Philip asked a few minutes afterwards, as Marie's head rested on his shoulder, and he pressed her lips to his.

'I know it,' she said quietly.

We do not care to linger over the happy talk of that twilight hour, and we doubt not that our readers were half-prepared for the story which Marie's tell-tale blush and Philip's beaming countenance revealed to the French pastor and his wife on their return from their walk.

‘Will you allow me to go to Coblenz with you to-morrow?’ Philip asked, adding with a smile, ‘Indeed, I fear I must accompany you to Paris, for I wish to see the Countess before taking Mademoiselle de Tours to England.’

‘Ah! c’est un fait accompli!’ exclaimed the clergyman laughingly, and hearty congratulations from the kind-hearted couple followed.

By and bye there was a quiet wedding in a Protestant Church in Paris; the Countess de Tours looked very happy, and as Marie’s uncle led her to the altar he whispered, ‘I would rather give you to Mr. Walton than see you a nun.’ To Philip he expressed his intention of leaving Marie his sole heiress, and Philip wished his new uncle ‘a long life,’ saying that his own fortune would provide amply for himself and his wife.


The curtain is generally supposed to fall as soon as a scene becomes pleasing, and perhaps some of our readers have ere this grown weary

of our story, while a few may care to know a little more about the varied characters portrayed.

For the sake, then, of such patient listeners we add a few sentences.

Passing over several years, and peeping in upon Fairley Hall on a July evening, we find Philip and Marie with a party of friends grouped around them on the lawn. Marie is looking younger than when she appeared before us in the cathedral. Happier days have chased the lines of care from her brow, while merry little faces near her give brightness to her smile. Philip is no idle squire, for he has a seat in Parliament, and at home he is foremost in every good and charitable work.

Mr. Lovewood, who is still the village rector, is standing by his side to-night, and talking to him. We observe our old friends the Grahams. Marie and the gentle Scotch lady are the best of friends, while the charms of the former's natural character have won her cousins' hearts



also. The Countess de Tours is one of the family party ; she has made Fairley her home, and we need scarcely add that she has now renounced Romanism. Good old nurse holds a prominent position in the household, and she and Mrs. Williams vie with each other in extolling their master and mistress. We must not forget to mention a venerable clergyman, who is seated near Marie, and occupying much of her attention. He is nearly blind, but the expression of his countenance is peaceful and happy, for his closing years have been brightened by the glad news that his daughter died in the true faith. His name is Mr. Clair, but our readers will know him better if we call him 'Sister Winifred's' father. Between him and Marie there is a warm affection, which he extends to every little child at Fairley Hall, and he is always a welcome guest. Two of the youngsters have just strayed from his side and are climbing on Philip's knee, while each is

begging 'Papa to tell a pretty story.' We are not sure that he may indulge them on this occasion, but there is a Scotch tale of which they never weary. It relates to a part of Philip's history which he remembers with deep gratitude, and often when his children gather round him at the twilight hour, he talks to them about the little peasant-girl whom he visited in Glen Cloy. The merriest little romp will then cease his play, and baby-sister listens with her earnest gaze, for the simple story has a nameless charm. And as the little ones hear that the 'ministering child' has passed away from her cottage home in the Highland glen to a brighter land, the ready tear will start, for all have learnt to know and love 'wee Lily's' name.

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